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## RITUAL MAGIC

It is because I see this peril in the marvel of  
psychic power that I am distressed by it, that  
I abhor it, that I loathe it.

GOTAMA THE BUDDHA





Faust sees the sign of the Macrocosm

# RITUAL MAGIC

BY

E. M. BUTLER

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University of Cambridge*



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## PREFACE

If my previous study, *The Myth of the Magus*, suffered under the inevitable superficiality which attends general surveys, the present investigation is more likely to arouse criticism by the narrowness of its scope. I have called it *Ritual Magic*; but it only deals with a limited number of printed texts localized almost exclusively in Europe and concentrated for the most part in specimens of a quasi-modern nature. The chief focus of interest lies in the Faustian rituals and the conclusions they have suggested, which I believe to be important, although they do not exhaust the many and various aspects of the underlying problem: the relationship between ritual and legend, the burning 'hen or egg' question of priority.

That so-called black magic is rarely as black as it has been painted is one of the conclusions to which I have been irresistibly drawn by a close scrutiny of the texts available. This I fear will not be generally acceptable; but folly is on the whole more prevalent than vice, as the 'black' rituals abundantly prove. The sensationallly-minded may console themselves with the reflexion that I have seen no Satanist texts and that my modified scepticism on the subject can therefore be discounted.

Magic, like poetry, resists precise definition; and in particular its connexion with religion is perplexing. There would appear to be no religion without some magic at its foundation, and certainly there is no magic in any significant sense without deep roots in religion. They are not unlike Siamese twins, inexorably yoked together yet spiritually incompatible. It undoubtedly needs an effort to contemplate this union objectively; but in the interests of the subject the effort has been made.

The really heavy going through so many almost unreadable texts has been lightened considerably at intervals by the help and kindness of friends. I should like to thank Mr George Rylands for the poetical first-aid he rendered in the matter of the Greek papyri; and Professor Dodds for his invaluable suggestions and advice on the same subject. That particular section owes a great



## PREFACE

deal to him. And once more I am deeply indebted to Miss I. B. Horner for her unfailing self-sacrifice in the matter of the proofs and the index and her sympathy throughout. As for the Syndics and officials of the Cambridge University Press, my debt to them has by now assumed such alarming proportions that it would need a larger volume than the present one to estimate it adequately.

E. M. BUTLER

CAMBRIDGE

## PART I. PRE-CHRISTIAN RITES AND CEREMONIES

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- (a) The Akkadian Inscriptions
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## CHAPTER I

### SOME ANCIENT MAGICAL TEXTS

#### (a) *The Akkadian Inscriptions*

The fundamental aim of all magic is to impose the human will on nature, on man or on the supersensual world in order to master them. To speak the language of Schopenhauer, magic is used in the service of the Will and is therefore akin to applied science; whereas pure science and art are concerned with the disinterested contemplation or investigation of nature and life. Two great branches of magic, astrology and alchemy, illustrate this distinction. Astrology is applied astronomy, based on observation of the heavens and on mathematical calculations. Alchemy is experimental chemistry. Both were founded on the belief in one principle underlying the universe. Astrology aimed at controlling and guiding the destinies of man by means of foreknowledge; alchemy was intent on discovering the secrets of nature in order to secure the prepotency of the individual over life and even over death by means of the philosopher's stone or universal medicine. These ends have proved incapable of achievement; and the means adopted suffered from inaccurate observation, erroneous assumptions and false conclusions; yet the belief in a universal spirit or principle animating the world has always been powerful. Moreover, the unremitting, if fruitless, labour, the infinite patience, the ingenuity, imagination, fanaticism and skill expended and wasted throughout the ages on these two branches of magic witness to the strength of the obsessive desire; and should clear the serious practitioners or victims from the charge of charlatanism in the minds of the candid.

Ceremonial or ritual magic, the third great branch of the subject, aimed principally at control of the spirit world. The means were complex and various, ranging from short spells and charms to lengthy and highly elaborate ceremonies, in which prayers and invocations played the major part. In the preparation for this kind of operation, however, the material world was also pressed into the service of the exorcist; and a whole science was reared on the

hypothesis of a natural affinity existing between the separate planets and luminaries and the metals, precious stones, birds, beasts, flowers, herbs, colours and scents believed to be proper to each and therefore capable of attracting the spirits inhabiting them or the gods who governed them into the orbit of the magician. The argument was for the most part from analogy, often of a most fantastic kind, but often too quite simple, as for instance in determining that gold was under the province of the sun, and red the colour of Mars. On these principles rings and amulets, garlands, sacrifices and incense were prepared as a preliminary step to the invocation of spirits in nearly all developed rituals which, from very early days, were bound up with astrology and demanded careful observation of the planetary aspects in choosing the appropriate times for the operations. In averting or curing diseases magical medicine of an occult or sympathetic or naturally efficacious kind was used; and a great deal of accumulated lore on this subject is to be found in the rituals. All this, and more besides, constituted the science of ceremonial magic which its devotees call the Art. And not without some justification. For the inventors and practitioners of the rites, however deeply versed in the lore of their subject and however obedient to its rules, often gave proof of the artistic temperament, to the advantage of the literature which has survived. The aim, like that of astrology, alchemy and applied science as a whole, was strictly practical; the means show evidence of creative instincts, poetical imagination and feeling for beauty and drama, in however crude and embryonic a state. This is what makes the study of ritual magic still interesting to-day; for the aesthetic element, inherent in the nature of ceremonial, can be detected struggling to emerge: as craftsmanship in the fashioning of talismans and rings, of instruments and amulets; as draughtsmanship in the inscriptions, diagrams and lettering; as plastic art in the modelling of figures, in the cave-drawings of animals, in portraits of the spirits; as poetry in the prayers and hymns; as drama in the urgency of the invocations, in the manifestations and occasional utterances of the spirits, as well as in the form of the ceremony as such.

The creative power of ritual, manifest in the dynamic nature of many of the printed texts, has been fully recognized in our age; and it is very generally held that religious rites and ceremonies

formed one of the sources from which myths and legends originally sprang. By the time they were sufficiently stereotyped to be preserved in written form, however, the creative energy had largely spent itself, and the invocations and exorcisms were addressed for the most part to spirits and gods whose names, powers and attributes were already part of the mythological inheritance of the authors, as in the Greek magical papyri and the Jewish and Christian rituals. At this stage of development, the myth conditions the ritual, reversing the earlier process. In the oldest magical documents known, the Akkadian-Chaldean inscriptions, an intermediate period of interaction appears to have been reached.

These inscriptions from the royal library of Niniveh were caused to be engraved in the original Akkadian language with Assyrian translations by Assurbanipal in the seventh century B.C., and are thought to date back to 1800 B.C. at least and probably even earlier. Addressed to the great gods of the Chaldean cosmos, the powerful rulers of heaven, of the earth, of the waters, of the underworld (who also form the subject of some fine hymns), they consisted very largely of exorcisms against the demons of sickness, pestilence, plagues and all other such evils. The religious system on which they were based was a clear-cut dualism; but the discrimination between good and evil rarely rose above material notions of the physically beneficent or maleficent; it led, however, to an extremely elaborate and well-developed demonology

... as subtle and as rich as Sprenger, Bodin, Wierus or de Lancre ever imagined; a whole world of wicked spirits, whose personalities are carefully distinguished, their attributes precisely determined, and their hierarchy learnedly classified.<sup>1</sup>

The exorcisms directed against these wicked spirits read as if the demons were considered to be identical with the diseases to be driven out, and are therefore in the nature of spiritual therapeutics, characterized by a wealth of medical detail. But the conflict between good and evil, between light and darkness was also represented at times on a cosmic plane; and the description of the ravages caused by the seven great planetary demons, or

<sup>1</sup> F. Lenormant, *La magie chez les Chaldéens et les origines accadiennes*, Paris, 1874, p. 22.

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*maskim*, the dark counterparts of the planetary gods, rises to a high imaginative level:

The Seven are born in the mountains of the West,  
The Seven go down in the mountains of the East,  
Their throne is in the depths of the earth...  
They are the instruments of the wrath of the gods,  
Disturbing the high road, they encamp by the way,  
The foes, the foes:  
Seven are they! Seven are they! Seven are they!...  
They are the day of mourning and of noxious winds!  
They are the day of fate, and the devastating wind which  
precedes it!  
They are the children of vengeance, the sons of revenge,  
They are the forerunners of the plague...  
They are the instruments of the wrath of Nin-kigal,  
They are the flaming pillar of fire which works evil on earth.<sup>1</sup>

These seven spirits of destruction form the subject of one of the dramatically-conceived invocations which abound in these texts. In this ritual the mediator Silik-mulu-khi is represented as interceding with his father, the great god Ea, to put an end to the ravages of the fiends. In his response Ea, besides other instructions, makes mention of the supreme magical name which he guards in his heart. This name, mysterious and divine, is the greatest and most irresistible of all the powers of magic. Ea, god of the earth and sea, is the only being in the whole universe who knows this secret word. When it is uttered everything bows down in heaven, on earth and in the infernal regions. And this name alone can subdue the seven *maskim* and stay their havoc. The gods themselves are bound by this name and obey it. Thus at the very dawn of history we meet the power supposed to reside in ineffable names which has blazed a broad trail through ritual magic. Here only one god, the great god Ea, knows it. It is inviolably guarded from the rest of the universe. In Egyptian magic on the other hand, the magicians claimed to know the mystic and hidden names of the gods, and to utter these in order to constrain them. But they kept them as the greatest secret, lest the power latent in them should be abused. And to make assurance doubly and trebly

<sup>1</sup> K. Kiesewetter, *Der Occultismus des Altertums*, Leipzig, n.d., I, p. 10.

sure, they used strange forms, unintelligible to the uninitiated, taken from foreign languages, or invented in remote antiquity:

O Oualbpaga! O Kammara! O Kamalo! O Karhenmou! O Amagaaa!<sup>1</sup>

So runs an invocation to Seth and Osiris dated under the reign of Rameses II.

In *The Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*, Iamblichus maintained, answering an objection made by Porphyry, that barbarous names taken from the idiom of the Egyptians and Assyrians had a mystical and ineffable virtue, owing to the great age of these languages, and because they were of divine origin and revealed in the theology of the people. This is a neo-Platonic rationalization of the mystery of the unknown; it gave the sanction of philosophy to a practice which has endured in magic from the Chaldeans down to our own times.

A characteristic feature of Chaldean magic was the adoration of the gods of the underworld, not in their quality of gods of fertility, but as guardians of the precious stones and metals hidden in the bosom of the earth. The sun of the underworld, that is to say the sun during its nightly pilgrimage, was in particular worshipped as the lord of all shining stones and metals. This conception was much in evidence in medieval magic, and the notion of what one might call the black metallurgical sun reappears in the great Faustian ritual. The appearance of the Chaldean demons in hideous and terrifying composite animal shapes was also to have a long history; and to judge by many of the exorcisms, the black magician of the Chaldees was wise to all the tricks, and full of the same deadly malice as his modern colleague four thousand years later:

He who makes the image, he who enchants, the evil face, the evil eye, the evil mouth, the evil tongue, the evil lip, the evil word,

Spirit of the sky, exorcise them! Spirit of the earth, exorcise them!<sup>2</sup>  
The Magician has bewitched me with his magic, he has bewitched me with his magic;  
The witch has bewitched me with magic; she has bewitched me with her magic...

<sup>1</sup> Lenormant, op. cit. p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 5.



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He who has fashioned images corresponding to my whole appearance has  
bewitched my appearance;  
He has seized the magic draught prepared for me and has soiled my  
garments;  
He has torn my garments and has mingled his magic herb with the dust  
of my feet;  
May the fire-god, the hero, turn their magic to nought!<sup>1</sup>

### (b) *The Graeco-Egyptian Magical Papyri*

The great age of ritual magic is amply witnessed to by the Chaldean texts and needs no further emphasis. In taking these few soundings before coming to modern times, I now pass on to the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri, in which the tradition is enshrined which later ages were to degrade and debase but never to obliterate. Written down between the first and fourth centuries of our era, some of the processes are Christianized; but it is not amongst these that the quality is to be found which those unacquainted with its discipline and written records associate with the word magic: something bewildering and fascinating, something glamorous. Yet in reality how barren the land, how stony the ground, how tenacious those ill weeds that have grown apace on the field of magical ritual,

that ominous tract which, all agree,  
Hides the Dark Tower.

Worse still, the Dark Tower itself is only an illusion, although the way to it, a fearful calvary of crucified hopes, is not. The spectre of futility mops and mows at the seeker round every corner of the road. But there are compensations; for the adventurer along the path of ceremonial magic is refreshed by occasional oases of beauty in the wasteland of the rites, mirage and magic melting into one. Such moments are frequent in the Greek papyri. Some of the rites are radiant and serene; others are lurid and even sinister; others again vibrate with spiritual power; and the boons demanded are not so disproportionate to the pressure brought to bear upon the gods as is too often the case. Although they include immunity from such commonplace ills as headaches and fevers and requests for beauty, victory and misfortunes on one's foes, the more important

<sup>1</sup> Kiesewetter, op. cit. I, pp. 29f.

processes were undertaken for loftier reasons: for divine visions or communion with the gods, for immortality or regeneration, for dreams, for prophecies and oracles. And when the aim was a lower one: the procuring of a familiar spirit, or the constraint of another's love, the language in its intensity and fecundity rises above the normal ritual level. An invocation to Hecate for instance, to the evil intention of a certain N.N., makes such an impression of cumulative relentlessness, that the exorcist does indeed seem to be dragging the moon down to the earth by sheer weight of words, as was fabled in antiquity of the Thessalian witches; and the following incantation, entitled *All-powerful might of the Constellation of the Great Bear*, seems in the original Greek like so many hammer-blows directed against the very heart of power:

I invoke you, ye holy ones, mighty, majestic, glorious Splendours, holy, and earth-born, mighty arch-daimons; compeers of the great god; denizens of Chaos, of Erebus and of the unfathomable abyss; earth-dwellers, haunters of sky-depths, nook-infesting, murk-enwrapped; scanning the mysteries, guardians of secrets, captains of the hosts of hell; kings of infinite space, terrestrial overlords, globe-shaking, firm-founding, ministering to earth-quakes; terror-strangling, panic-striking, spindle-turning; snow-scatterers, rain-wafters, spirits of air; fire-tongues of summer-sun, tempest-tossing lords of fate; dark shapes of Erebus, senders of necessity; flame-fanning fire-darters; snow-compelling, dew-compelling; gale-raising, abyss-plumbing, calm-bestriding air-spirits; dauntless in courage, heart-crushing despots; chasm-leaping, overburdening, iron-nerved daimons; wild-raging, unenslaved; watchers of Tartaros; delusive fate-phantoms; all-seeing, all-hearing, all-conquering, sky-wandering vagrants; life-inspiring, life-destroying, primeval pole-movers; heart-jocund death-dealers; revealers of angels, justicers of mortals, sunless revealers, masters of daimons, air-roving, omnipotent, holy, invincible [magic words], perform my behests.<sup>1</sup>

As against the prayers, hymns, exorcisms and invocations, the practical instructions are on a lower plane, betraying a primitive origin and eloquent at times of the dark subsoil from which the arresting flowers of Greek magical poetry have sprung. The preparations comprise varying periods of purity, chastity, sobriety and austerity before the operation; ceremonial ablution, at times ritual abstention from bathing, the donning of ceremonial or prophetic

<sup>1</sup> K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, Leipzig, 1928-31, I, p. 118.

garments of clean linen underline the priestly nature of the magician's function. Minute instructions for the fashioning of figures, talismans, rings and charms; recipes for the composition of incense, of lamp-oil and of hieratic ink abound; an ebony wand, a laurel-wreath, a snake-skin are among the sometimes very complicated paraphernalia considered necessary; milk, wine, honey and cakes are frequently set out for the entertainment of the spirit to be invoked; animal sacrifice figures rather largely; and sometimes the slaughtered creature (a cat or a beetle) is baptized in the name of the god or daimon whose presence is implored. On the whole the instructions in these Greek texts, although not prohibitively difficult to obey, are by no means easy either, and would frequently demand considerable physical and mental effort. The following process to obtain consecration is midway between the extremes of complication and simplification to be found in the papyri:

Keep yourself pure for seven days, and then go on the third day of the moon to a place which the receding Nile has just laid bare. Make a fire on two upright bricks with olive-wood, that is to say thin wood, when the sun is half-risen, after having before sunrise circumambulated the altar. But when the sun's disc is clear above the horizon, decapitate an immaculate, pure-white cock, holding it in the crook of your left elbow; circumambulate the altar before sunrise. Hold the cock fast by your knees and decapitate it with no one else holding it. Throw the head into the river, catch the blood in your right hand and drink it up. Put the rest of the body on the burning altar and jump into the river. Dive under in the clothes you are wearing, then stepping backwards climb on to the bank. Put on new clothes and go away without turning round. After that take the gall of a raven and rub some of it with the wing of an ibis on your eyes and you will be consecrated.<sup>1</sup>

If less complicated than some of the preparations, this process is also more innocuous than others; and indeed in most cases the ingredients for the incense contain unpleasing elements; the symbols used in one of the exorcisms of Selene illustrate this darker side; they include an old sieve, a crust of bread, a coral, blood of a turtle-dove, a camel's hoof, a hair from a virgin ox, seed of Pan, fire of the sun's rays, colt's-foot, spindle-tree, a borer, a blue-shimmering female corpse with legs apart, and the transfixed privy parts of a female monkey. Yet, however gruesome and squalid and

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, op. cit. I, p. 68.

even disgusting some of the *impedimenta* may be which the exorcist is advised to use, the invocations are always shot through with poetry, even when it is poetry of a lurid and at times of a livid hue.

Entirely free from any taint of evil or ugliness is the description of the transformation undergone and the visions seen in the process for attaining to immortality or regeneration. The operator first utters a long and lovely prayer, which ends thus:

For to-day I will see with my immortal eyes, born a mortal from a mortal womb, raised with almighty power and an imperishable right hand, by the immortal spirit, the immortal Aeon and Lord of the fiery diadems, purified by holy purifications... For, born a mortal, I cannot mount on high with the golden rays of immortal light; stand still therefore, perishable human nature, and let me be carried in safety after to the inexorable and sorely-pressing need. For I am the Son [magic words], I am [magic words].

Breathe in the rays three times as deeply as you can, and you will see yourself caught up and expanding in stature, so that you seem to be in mid-air. And you will hear nothing, neither human sound, nor noise of any other creature; nor will you see anything of the mortals on this earth in that hour... For you will see the divine constellation of that day and hour: the gods proceeding round the pole, how some stride up to heaven and some stride down;... and you will see how the gods look at you sharply and come towards you. Then place immediately the index finger of your right hand on your lips and say: 'Silence, silence, silence, symbol of the imperishable living god, protect me, silence!'. . . and then you will see the gods looking at you graciously, and no longer advancing towards you, but each betaking himself to the sphere of his proper activity.

In the succeeding prayer, the dying man invokes

...because of the pressing and bitter and inexorable necessity, the names that never yet found an entrance to mortal nature, and were never spoken in articulate speech of human tongue, or human sound, or human voice, the ever-living peerless names [rows of vowel-sounds]... .

When you have spoken in this wise, you will hear thunder and rushing of the air-space all around; and you yourself will feel that you are shaken to your depths. Then say again: 'Silence'...; thereupon open your eyes and you will see the gates open and the world of the gods within the gates; and your spirit, gladdened by the sight, will feel itself drawn onwards and upwards. Now remain standing still and draw the divine

essence into yourself, regarding it fixedly. And when your soul has come to itself again, then speak: 'Approach, Lord!' [magic words]. After these words, the rays will turn towards you; and you, focus your gaze on the centre. If you do that, you will see a god, very young, beautifully formed, with flame-like hair, in a white tunic with a red mantle and a fiery wreath.

The greeting to the god includes the striking words:

Lord, I depart, reborn. I die receiving strength and strengthened. Born in life-creating birth, dissolved into death, I go my way as thou hast ordained the mystery and founded it.<sup>1</sup>

Although this is the most remarkable of the magico-mystical operations described in the papyri, there are many more, and it would seem that visions of the gods, whether the magician were awake or asleep, were the most highly coveted of the gifts magic could procure, although in nearly every case, and the above is no exception, it was not only divine contemplation that was desired, but oracles and prophecies about the future. After an extremely impressive ceremony in full dress, preceded by a cosmological genesis, the magician, clad in priestly robes, and having invoked divine names by the score, will see the god appear:

And when the god now enters, do not look him straight in the face, but look at his feet, and at the same time speak the prayer in the text, and thank him that he has not treated you arrogantly, but that you have been thought worthy of instruction for the favourable direction of your life.

Ask him: 'Lord, what has been laid down for me?' And he will tell you about your star, and about the nature of your daimon, and what your horoscope is like, and where you will live and die. But if you hear something bad, do not break out into screams and tears, but beg him to annihilate it himself or turn it into other courses. For this god can accomplish anything.<sup>2</sup>

Although disinterestedness is not to be expected from magic, the self-interest may be of a nobler or baser sort; and in the service of the latter kind are to be found in particular a large number of violent love-spells, frenzied in tone and ruthless in intention. A pair of wax dolls is necessary for the following operation, the female to be pierced with thirteen needles through the brain, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, bowels and privy parts. The figures must then

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, *op. cit.* I, pp. 90ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119.

be placed at sundown on the grave of someone who has died untimely or by a violent death, with flowers appropriate to the season:

I place this charm down beside you, subterranean gods, Kore Persephone, Ereschigal and Adonis [magic words], Hermes, the subterranean, Thoth and the strong Anubis, who hold the keys of those in Hades, the gods of the underworld and the daimons, those untimely reft away, men, women, youths and maidens, year by year, month by month, day by day, hour by hour. I conjure you, all daimons assembled here, to assist this daimon. And awaken at my behest, whoever you may be, whether male or female. Betake yourself to that place and that street and that house and bring her hither, and bind her. Bring N.N. hither, daughter of N.N., whose magic stuff you have, loving me, N.N., son of N.N. Let her sleep with none other, let her have no pleasurable intercourse with any other man, save with me, N.N., alone. Let N.N. neither drink nor eat, nor love, nor be strong nor well, let her have no sleep except with me, N.N., because I conjure you by the terrible terror-striking name of him, who, when his name is heard, will cause the earth hearing it to open; the daimons, hearing his fearful name, will be afraid, the rivers and the rocks, hearing his name, will burst.<sup>1</sup>

There is much more in the same vein; but the passage quoted is sufficient to show that this is not only black magic, but also necromancy, since it is the spirits of the dead who are invoked. In another very similar ceremony, the gods of the underworld are called upon to release the spirits of dead 'heroes', gladiators, or any others who have died by violence or before their time and constrain them to bring the beloved to the exorcist.

In order to be quite sure that the gods in question would render this aid, or assist the magician to perform other works of violence and destruction on his fellow-men or women, a curious and interesting device was employed in some of the rituals. The person to whose intention the ceremony was performed was represented as having slandered or blasphemed the god or goddess, and therefore meriting divine chastisement:

For I come to announce a slander made by the criminal and wicked N.N. She has spoken blasphemously of your sacred mysteries, and betrayed them to men. It is N.N. who said—it is not I who said this: 'I

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, *op. cit.* I, pp. 82f. This necromantic 'defixio' is older than this papyrus text and is genuinely Greek.

saw how the great goddess left the heavenly vault, and wandering bare-foot on earth, carrying a sword, called out an unseemly name.' It was N.N. who said: 'I saw the goddess drink blood.' It was N.N. who said this, not I... Go to N.N. and deprive her of sleep, and let her burn, let her senses be chastised, let her be rendered wild with passion and drive her out from every place and every house, and bring her here to me, N.N.<sup>1</sup>

The unhappy, and presumably innocent, N.N. was also said to have offered the most blasphemous incense to Selene, containing, amongst other impure ingredients, the heart of one who had died untimely. It is small wonder that the exorcist was warned to use this process sparingly, to take strong protective measures when having recourse to it; and not to do so unless the results aimed at were worth the risk involved.

Here and elsewhere, although infrequently, some fear of the gods and the spirits is expressed; and on one occasion, but only one, a circle is mentioned, to be drawn with chalk and inscribed with characters; otherwise talismans carried on the person were chiefly relied upon. In one invocation, in which a familiar spirit was to be obtained from Apollo, the god was asked to send him in a mild and gentle mood, harbouring no evil against the exorcist; and Apollo was also implored not to be wrathful, but to protect the magician, so that his body should not be injured. No injury to the soul was ever mentioned; but the appearance of the spirit in an alarming form ('do not frighten my eyes') was evidently once envisaged. And an invocation to 'the great, inexorable daimon... the twice-great Hermes', in which a captive beetle was used as a constraint, obviously needed more than a little courage:

Remain standing without fear... for he whom you invoke will urge you and constrain you, menacing and armed, to release the beetle. But do not be alarmed, and do not release it, until he reveals [? the future] to you; and then, but not till then, release it quickly.<sup>2</sup>

The constraints put upon the gods to appear could become very severe and were sometimes accompanied by menaces. In order to summon Apollo for mantic purposes, two virgin cocks must be sacrificed, one to the sun and the other to the moon. Should the

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, *op. cit.* I, pp. 148f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

god ignore this appeal, the brain of a black ram must be offered up on the second day, and on the third the little claw from the right fore-foot; on the fourth day the brain of an ibis should be offered; and if this too is of no avail, the following measures must be taken:

Throw the figure drawn below, which you have drawn with myrrh-ink and wrapped up in a piece of a garment belonging to someone violently slain, into the hot-water furnace. But some say not into the furnace, as the effect is too violent; they hang it over the light or place it under the light. In another copy I have found it put like this: If he still does not hear you, wrap up the figure in the same rag and throw it into the bath-furnace on the fifth day of the invocation, and say as you do it: 'Abri and Abro, Exantiabil, God of Gods, King of Kings, now force a friendly prophetic daimon to come to me, that I may not have to proceed to worse punishments, to those written on these strips.'<sup>1</sup>

In an incantation to the daimon of the dead, a sacrifice is promised when the spirit shall have obeyed; otherwise he is menaced with unendurable torments; and Selene is threatened with the wrath of the gods if she does not come to the exorcist, and is told that the Fates will throw her thread of life away. Worse still is the doom in store for a daimon summoned to frighten a certain N.N. to death. Should he hesitate, the great god will be informed by the magician, and the former will transfix the recalcitrant spirit, hew off his limbs and give his flesh to a mangy dog upon a dung-heap to devour. Aphrodite, on the other hand, is constrained by more poetical means:

But if you act negligently, although a goddess you will never see Adonis return from Hades. For I will immediately hasten to bind him with fetters of steel; I will guard him and place him on a second Ixion's wheel, and he will never see the light again; he will be tortured and overcome. Therefore, mistress, do as I say: bring hither N.N. daughter of N.N....<sup>2</sup>

These methods of constraint are relatively rare. Magic words and magic names, shading off into each other, are of paramount importance. Rows upon rows of vowel-sounds, totally unintelligible words; lists of angels' names ending in -el, and clearly borrowed

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, op. cit. I, pp. 22f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 164. This constraint is partly in verse, and was probably adapted from an original wholly in verse.



from or modelled on those to be found in Jewish apocalyptic literature, such as URIEL, MICHAEL, GABRIEL, RAPHAEL, ASAEI, NARIEL, all in the *Book of Enoch*; Hebrew names for God, and Hebrew prophets; Greek, Egyptian, Persian divinities; they were all used more or less indiscriminately, together with many more which no philologist would be able to identify as belonging to any language-group; for the more mysterious, the more bewildering, the more unfamiliar the better. There is one particular list of a hundred such jumbled names, headed by IAO, SABAOth, ADONAI, EILOEM, followed by Egyptian and said-to-be Persian and Parthian deities, which is preceded by an impressive description of the power of the mystic name

... the secret, inexpressible name, before which the daimons tremble when they hear it; before which the sun too and the earth cringe when they hear it; and before which on hearing it Hades is thrown into confusion; rivers, seas, swamps, springs freeze when they hear it; rocks burst when they hear it; and so does the heaven, which is thy head, the ether, thy body, the earth, thy feet, the waters which surround thee, the ocean, the good daimon.<sup>1</sup>

Although some of the boons, as I have said, are of a lofty kind, a certain disillusion has to be faced when scanning enumerations of the gifts and powers which some of the grander invocations (probably borrowed from religious sources to judge by the high spiritual level) aimed at procuring:

This is the holy operation for winning a familiar spirit. The process shows that he is the god; a spirit of the air was he whom you saw. He will perform at once any commission you may give him. He will send dreams, he will bring you women and men without need of a material link; he will remove, he will subdue, he will hurl winds up from the bosom of the earth; he will bring gold, silver, bronze and give it to you, if you need it; he will also free from bonds the prisoner in chains, he opens doors, he renders you invisible, so that no human soul can see you; he will bring fire, carry water, bring wine, bread, and any other food you want: oil, vinegar, everything except fish, as many vegetables as you want; but as for pork, you must never command him to bring that. And if you wish to give a banquet, state your intention and order him to make ready with all speed any suitable place you have chosen for

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, op. cit. II, p. 74.

it. He will forthwith build round it a room with a gilded ceiling, and you will see its walls shining with marble, and you will partly believe it to be a reality and partly only an illusion. And he will provide precious wine too, such as is necessary to the splendour of the banquet, and he will hastily summon daimons and provide you with servants in livery. All this he will do in the twinkling of an eye... He can bind ships and loose them again; he can ban wicked daimons in any quantity; he can soothe wild animals and instantly break the teeth of wild reptiles; he can send dogs to sleep and make them noiseless; he can transform into any shape or form as a winged creature, a water-creature, a four-footed beast or a reptile. He will carry you through the air and throw you down again into the waves of the sea and the ocean streams; he will make rivers and seas fast in a moment, so that you can walk on them upright, if you wish... and if you wish to draw down the stars, and make warm cold, and cold warm, he will do it for you; he will make lights shine and go out; he will shake walls and reduce them by fire; he will be serviceable to you in all that you may desire, you happy mystic of holy magic.<sup>1</sup>

An English reader will involuntarily think of Prospero, a German student will remember the hero of the Faust books; and whilst marvelling at the strength of tradition, grieve over the limitation of human desires. The control over nature, constantly claimed by the magi of old, was also envisaged in a novelistic fragment in the papyri as a power to which magicians could attain without the intermediary of a familiar spirit

...and if I command the moon, it will come down; and if I wish to withhold the day, night will tarry over my head; and again, if I wish to embark on the sea, I need no ship; and if I wish to fly through the air, I am freed from my weight.<sup>2</sup>

The mysteries enacted in the Graeco-Egyptian rituals included the preliminary course of preparation, prayers, invocations, constraints, the manifestation of the spirit, the petition and the dismissal. How long that form had been fixed by custom it is impossible to say; but it has remained essentially the same from that day to this, and seems so obvious and inevitable, so much dictated by the nature of the performance, that one can hardly imagine a different structure. But the mould admits of widely divergent contents, of elaborations and variations without end.

<sup>1</sup> Preisendanz, op. cit. I, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. II, p. 159.

## RITUAL MAGIC

Genuine prayers and hair-raising blasphemies can be poured into it; it can be a vessel for mystical aspirations, diabolical purposes, fanciful day-dreams or stark materialism; and the tone in which the conjurations are uttered is at least as mutable. Yet through all the chances and changes which beset the contents, the form remains inherently dramatic.

## CHAPTER II

### POETICAL RECORDS OF MAGIC

Although all ancient literature is impregnated with ritual elements and often describes ritual performances, thus vouching for their prevalence in life, the most striking magical operations to be met with are necromantic. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which probably originated with the Sumerians in the fourth millennium or even earlier, and whose earliest texts are clay tablets in the Akkadian language, there is a most striking final scene, in which the hero is intent on raising the spirit of his dead friend Enkidu. In the first horror of his loss, he had gone seeking for eternal life in order to avoid a similar extinction; but all his efforts had been thwarted; and finally he set about summoning Enkidu back from the shades, so that he might learn the kind of fate in store for him when his own hour should strike. He first enquired what were the tabus to be observed by the mourner to prevent him from being haunted by the dead; on learning these he deliberately broke them all; but, although hosts of spirits gathered and circled round him and even gibbered at him, Enkidu was not in their midst. He therefore betook himself to the temple of the god Enlil and then to the Moon-god, beseeching them to raise his friend from the earth, but neither vouchsafed him an answer.

Then to Ea he hied him:

'Ea, my Father, 'tis now that the seine hath stricken me also,  
Down to the earth—the net to the earth hath stricken me also.  
Enkidu 'tis,—whom I pray thee to raise from the earth,—not the  
Plague-god,  
Namtar, hath seized him, nor fever, but only the earth: nor the Croucher,  
Nergal, the ruthless, hath seized him, but only the earth: neither fell he  
There where was battle of mortals: 'twas only the earth which hath  
seized him.'

Ea, the father, gave ear and to Nergal, the warrior-hero,  
Spake he: 'O Nergal, O warrior-hero, give ear to my speaking!  
Ope now a hole in the earth, that the spirit of Enkidu, rising,  
May from the earth issue forth, and so have speech with his brother.'  
Nergal, the warrior-hero, gave ear to the speaking of Ea,

Oped, then, a hole in the earth, and the spirit of Enkidu issued  
Forth from the earth like a wind. They embraced and...

Communed together, mourning.

'Tell, O my friend, O tell, O my friend, O tell me I pr'y thee,  
What thou hast seen of the laws of the Underworld?' 'Nay, then, O  
comrade;

I will not tell thee, yea, I will not tell thee—for were I to tell thee,  
What I have seen of the laws of the Underworld,—sit thee down  
weeping!'

'Then let me sit me down weeping.'

And there is cause for weeping in a place of desolation where the  
worm and the dust corrupt; where the neglected dead are forced to  
drink the lees of cups and to eat broken bread thrown into the  
street, whilst those who have not been buried find no resting-place  
in earth; a sombre picture, hardly relieved by a glimpse of the  
favoured few at rest upon couches and drinking limpid water.

Although there is no feeling of reality in this account of the  
raising of Enkidu, it has great emotional truth both as regards the  
state of mind of Gilgamesh, and of the partly materialistic, partly  
fanciful and mystical notions held by the Sumerians and Akkadians  
about the state of the dead. It will also be noticed that the great  
god Ea of the Akkadian cosmos is the only one capable of forcing  
the god of the underworld, Nergal, to release the spirit of Enkidu  
in order that he may speak with his friend. The operation is accom-  
plished by prayers to Ea, no sacrifice is offered; and it would  
appear that the spirit, since it rose up like a wind, may not have  
been clearly visible to Gilgamesh, although distinctly audible. On  
the other hand, since the two friends embraced, the poet may have  
imagined it taking on its former shape after it had come up  
through the hole. But, whether the ghost was formless or not, the  
conversation between Gilgamesh and Enkidu is extraordinarily  
moving.

If an elegiac note is the main feature of the raising of Enkidu,  
tragedy permeates the arresting and dramatic account of the calling  
up of Samuel in the Old Testament. Gilgamesh was overcome by  
sorrow; but the unhappy and tormented Saul was driven by fear of  
the impending battle with the Philistines, occurring as it did at a

<sup>1</sup> *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, tr. Campbell Thompson, London, 1928,  
pp. 59f.

moment when his former power and glory had signally deserted him. His mind, prone at all times to fearful assaults of darkness and despair, was now frantically wrestling with the impalpable shadow of his approaching doom and desperately seeking foreknowledge of the future. But in vain had he enquired of the Lord: neither by dreams, nor by the Urim in the High Priest's breastplate, nor by the prophets had he been answered; and although he himself had banished all wizards and witches from the land, he now enquired of his servants where such a one could be found. They directed him to the Witch of Endor, and two of them accompanied him on his stealthy midnight expedition to consult her on the eve of the fatal battle

...and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou?

And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?<sup>1</sup>

This uncanny scene, developing into wrathful and ominous prophecies, punctually fulfilled, is extremely convincing, possibly because of the unadorned chronicle style. Saul, like Gilgamesh, appears to have heard the voice of the spirit, but not to have seen it.

<sup>1</sup> I Samuel xxviii. 8-15.

At the very moment of its rising from the earth, the witch was enlightened as to the identity of the king, who had come in disguise; and she spoke as if a host of gods or spirits accompanied the old man, whom Saul recognized to be Samuel from her description. The latter then spoke, possibly with the voice and certainly in the manner of the departed prophet, who had been bitterly estranged from the King before he died. The complaint of being 'disquieted' by being brought up, heard here as far as I know for the first time, was to be a constant refrain of ghosts constrained to appear before necromancers. Together with the edict against wizards and witches promulgated by Saul it serves to underline the unlawful, dark and forbidden nature of the proceedings, which is not evident in the *Epic of Gilgamish*.

The notion of danger and daring rather than guilt impregnates the famous experiment in necromancy performed by Odysseus. It was in the gloomy land of the Cimmerians, where the sun never shone, that the hero set about performing the rites and sacrifices necessary to call up the dead, because he wished to learn the course of his future life from the seer Tiresias. Like Saul, he determined to summon the soul of a departed prophet; and Tiresias like Samuel came with other spirits crowding round him. But here the resemblance ends. Like Gilgamish, Odysseus performed the operation himself, and like Gilgamish too, he called upon the gods of the underworld for aid; but he also offered sacrifices. Having dug a trench with his sword, he poured libations of honey, wine and water round it and besprinkled it with meal; he then made vows and uttered prayers to the nations of the dead, filling the trench with the blood of slaughtered sheep, whereupon the souls of the perished came thronging forth from Erebus. This evidently terrified Odysseus' companions; for he fell to exhorting them, and commanded them to offer up the sheep as a burnt sacrifice to Pluto and Persephone, invoking them by name. For the ghosts were thirsty for the blood which would restore them to some semblance of animation. There was therefore something of the vampire in their composition, and Odysseus had to keep them back with his sword until Tiresias appeared, in whom memory was still alive, and who addressed the hero thus:

Why, unfortunate, why now, leaving the realm of the sunlight,  
Comest thou hither to visit the dead and their dolorous country?

Nay, hold back from the trenches and withdrawing thy keen-edged weapon  
Grant me to drink of the blood; so truth shall I tell thee unerring.<sup>1</sup>

Having prophesied Odysseus' future adventures and his return home, Tiresias instructed the hero, who wished to converse with the shade of his mother, that only after they had drunk of the blood could any of the shades tell him the truth; he then went back to the abode of Pluto, and one after another the souls came up, drank and spoke with the hero: Achilles and others, like Enkidu, mournfully referring to the desolate state of life after death. Odysseus, after numerous colloquies, stood waiting to see if any other of the heroes of yore were yet to come; but becoming aware that myriads of the nations of the dead were pressing around him and clamouring, he was seized with fear, broke off the proceedings and hastened back to his ship, dreading lest Persephone might send him some monstrous Gorgon shape from Orcus. This natural fear was not due to the workings of a guilty conscience aware of impiety in raising the ghosts of the dead; it was a sudden reaction to the darkness and danger around him, which his interest in the conversations had caused him to forget.

The scene in the *Odyssey* sounds like fiction based upon fact, whereas the summoning of Samuel makes the impression of a true story told at second hand. The raising of Darius in Aeschylus' *Persians* is a poetical sublimation of magico-religious rites, described by a poet who evidently believed in communication between the living and the dead. Atossa pours similar libations on the tomb of Darius to those Odysseus offered round the trench, but milk and olive-oil are added, and there is no mention of a blood-sacrifice. The Chorus then at her entreaty utters the invocation, which is addressed partly to the gods of the underworld and partly to Darius himself:

While thou send'st down to his dwelling beneath the ground  
That pure libation, we with a hymn will call  
On the powers that conduct the soul o'er the darkling bound  
To be kind, and release the spirit they hold in thrall.  
Hermes, and Earth, and King of the Powers of Night,  
Great holy beings that govern the world below,  
Send up, we pray you, his soul from beneath to light;  
For a cure of our troublous evil, if cure he know....

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* xi, ll. 92-6, tr. Cotterill (London, 1911).



Earth, and rulers of the people of the shadowy place,  
 Send him upward, we implore,  
 Like to none that in past ages Persian earth has covered o'er,  
 Persia's God, of Achaemenian race.

Loved was the hero, loved his mound of rest,  
 Beloved and mourned the life it hides from day.  
 Hades, release of thy great grace, we pray,  
 Divine Darius, of all rulers best!...

Master and lord, appear! Our lord of old,  
 Rise by the summit of thy mound of rest...  
 Rearing thy turban, with the imperial crest;  
 Come, father, ancient source of blessings manifold!<sup>1</sup>

These 'ghost-compelling anthems' and the soul-softening drink-offerings cause the spirit of Darius to appear, although

Hard the road  
 From Hades forth to light; the gods beneath  
 Are swift to seize and tardy to let go.  
 Yet hath my power with them prevailed. I am here.  
 But haste, lest I be censured for delay...<sup>2</sup>

Darius has first to learn of the dire events which have befallen his kingdom under his son Xerxes, before, having reproved the recklessness and impiety of the latter, he prophesies the disaster at Plataea. Then, in his own words, he passes to 'nether darkness'.

Although three of these instances of necromancy occur in works of poetry, the operations performed and the rites described are not regarded or treated as an object in themselves, but merely as an organic part of the epic or dramatic action, as something that would or might naturally occur in the circumstances in which the characters are placed. It is rather a different story when we come to the more sophisticated Latin poets, who chose magical rites deliberately as poetical subjects for the sake of their strange or terrifying nature, in a word for their aesthetic value. Such a treatment of magical texts is outside the main scope of my enquiry; but some of them are interesting nevertheless for the light they shed on the influence exerted by such incantations as those preserved in the Greek magical papyri.

<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus, *Persians*, ll. 625-66; tr. Campbell.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. ll. 687-91.

In Virgil's eighth eclogue (*Pharmaceutria*) a Thessalian girl is introduced performing magical rites and spells in order to bring back her truant lover Daphnis:

Fetch me the water; with soft wreaths circle the altar divine;  
Burn to the gods rich boughs, heap frankincense on the fire;  
So to the passionless heart of this ice-cold lover of mine  
I may reach with my magic; it is but a chant we require.  
Homeward bring from the city, my chants, bring Daphnis again.  
Chants from her heavenly station can draw down even the moon!  
Circe once with a chant transformed Ulysses' train.  
Cold snakes split in the meadows asunder with chant and with tune!  
Homeward bring from the city, my chants, bring Daphnis again.<sup>1</sup>

There is something very compelling about the refrain, although it lacks the almost sinister pressure exerted on the recalcitrant lovers in the papyri texts; but spiritual compulsion was the aim and object of the spells nevertheless:

May such love upon Daphnis be laid as the heifer's, who hies  
Wearily after her mate through the forest and hills in the quest.  
Down by the river bank upon greenest sedges she lies,  
Lost in her grief, nor remembers at nightfall late to arise.  
Such may his love be, nor I care ever to heal his unrest.  
Homeward bring from the city, my chants, bring Daphnis again.<sup>2</sup>

The enchantress moreover had made three images of Daphnis. The first was paraded three times round the altar (an uneven number being acceptable to the shrine) bound round three times with three different-coloured threads which were knotted together with the words: 'Thus do I bind the fillets of Venus.' This ritual binding of the lover was followed by the melting of the waxen image, so that his heart might soften to the sorceress, and by the baking of the clay image, in order to harden his heart against her rival. A cake crumbled over the fire was presumably an offering to Venus, and the crackling flames of the bay-tree boughs were symbolic both of the passion consuming the girl's heart and the passion she hoped to reawaken in his. But not content with all this, she proceeded to bury some old garments of his beneath the threshold as a pledge that he would return; and finally burnt poisonous herbs of proved

<sup>1</sup> C. Bowen, *Virgil in English Verse*, London, 1887, I, pp. 54f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 55. The whole eclogue is imitated from the second idyll of Theocritus.

magical efficacy. She had herself seen Moeris who gave them to her transformed by these means into the shape of a wolf; had seen him by their aid call forth ghosts from their tombs and transport rich harvests of grain from one field to another. Giving the ashes of these herbs to her attendant Amaryllis, she commanded her to throw them over her shoulder into a brook nearby without looking behind her. Then, just as she was beginning to despair of success, she saw a flame burn up from the cinders on the altar, heard the watch-dog bark, and knew that Daphnis was returning.

This lovely poem reveals black elements in the magic practised but no real blackness in the heart of the enchantress. The same cannot be said of the repulsive witch Canidia in Horace's fifth Epode. She is represented as a monster of ugliness doing an innocent lad to death by means of the most appalling tortures, in order to use his marrow and spleen in the concoction of a love-charm for her own use against Varus. Other elements of a poisonous nature enter into the brew, and since incantations play no part, one can dismiss it as pure witchcraft or at least contrast Canidia with Virgil's sorceress as an illustration of the difference between magic and witchcraft, a difference easier to feel than to explain, but which exists between the baser art and magic, even when the latter is black as Egypt's night. Horace introduced a touch of traditional magic into this revolting poem, when he said of the witch Folia that she could drag the moon and the stars down from the sky by her spells.

Thessaly, later immortalized by Apuleius as the home of enchantments, was reputed in antiquity to be the sinister breeding-ground of the most potent and evil witches and warlocks in the world. Lucan seized upon it in the *Pharsalia* for one of the most lurid and sensational descriptions of the black arts ever given, although Gryphius in *Cardenio and Celinde* ran him very close, and even outdistanced him in squalor and obscenity. Oddly enough the hideous process in necromancy in the *Pharsalia*, whittled down to its essentials, follows exactly the same pattern as those in the Book of Samuel and in the *Persians*: at a moment of great crisis a dead man is raised to prophesy the course of an impending battle and prophesies disaster to the enquirer. But what a world of difference between the stark prose narrative of the Bible, the sublime language of Aeschylus and the fevered ravings of Lucan; between

something hallowed and yet unholy in the raising of Samuel, the white magic of Queen Atossa and the pitch-black art of Erichtho! The latter nevertheless has some features in her spells which are also to be found in the magical papyri. Sextus Pompeius is moreover in something of the same state of mind as Saul when he comes to consult the witch, preferring this course to questioning the established oracles or to any other lawful but secret means of divining the future. Saul for his part had vainly asked for dreams and prophecies from the Lord. Sextus was more impious:

For to him was known  
That which excites the hate of gods above;  
Magicians' lore, the savage creed of Dis  
And all the shades; and sad with gloomy rites  
Mysterious altars. For his frenzied soul  
Heaven knew too little.<sup>1</sup>

Lucan then launched out into a terrific description of the power of Thessalian spells over the unwilling gods and over mortals too:

To hearts of flint those incantations bring  
Love, strange, unnatural; the old man's breast  
Burns with illicit fire. Nor lies the power  
In harmful cup....  
Charmed forth by spells alone the mind decays,  
By poisonous drugs unharmed.<sup>2</sup>

Evil and powerful as this magic is represented to be, Erichtho nevertheless scorned it for its piety, and practised a yet viler art in a novel form, the art of necromancy, for a not altogether illogical reason:

Obscure may be the answers of the gods  
By priestess spoken at the holy shrine;  
But whoso braves the oracles of death,  
In search of truth, should gain a sure response.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the ghost of a man newly slain was considered by her to be the most satisfactory medium:

From dead men's lips  
Scarce cold, in fuller accents falls the voice;  
Not from some mummied frame in accents shrill  
Uncertain to the ear.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Ridley, *The Pharsalia of Lucan*, 2nd ed., London, 1870, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 179.

After the most brutal manhandling of the chosen corpse, and the distillation of the vilest poisons, the incantation to the gods of the underworld ran its horrible course, mingled, as in some of the papyri too, with threats of blackmail:

And thou, too, Hecate,  
 Who to the gods in comely shape and mien,  
 Not that of Erebus, appear'st, henceforth  
 Wasted and pallid as thou art in hell  
 At my command shalt come. I'll noise abroad  
 The banquet that beneath the solid earth  
 Holds thee, thou maid of Enna; by what bond  
 Thou lov'st night's King, by what mysterious stain  
 Infected, so that Ceres fears from hell  
 To call her daughter.<sup>1</sup>

The wretched ghost, listening to this violent pressure brought to bear on the gods of the underworld as it stood dumbly near the corpse, was now forced to enter and animate it; and though unable to speak of its own volition, proved capable (in answer to Erichtho's promptings) to foretell the dismal fate in store for Pompey after the battle he was shortly to lose, and also to hint at the early death of Sextus. The reward promised to the spirit for this service and duly performed was a real death, a death by burning, from which no magic incantations could ever recall him:

Such burial place  
 Shall now be thine, and on thy funeral pyre  
 Such fatal woods shall burn, such chant shall sound,  
 That to thy ghost no more or magic song  
 Or spell shall reach, and thy Lethaeon sleep  
 Shall never more be broken...<sup>2</sup>

We have certainly travelled far since that mournful meeting between Gilgamesh and the spirit of his friend Enkidu. Yet foreknowledge has been throughout the aim of the experiments in necromancy recorded in antiquity: the laws of the underworld, the fate of battles, the future of Odysseus' wanderings; and strangely enough the most spiritual of all the ventures (prompted in the first instance by the shock and the sorrow of a great loss) was the one most remote from us in time and the one closest to modern endeavours in the spiritualistic field.

<sup>1</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.* pp. 183f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 184.

## CHAPTER III

### JEWISH ELEMENTS IN MAGIC

#### (a) *The Testament of Solomon*

The turning-point between ancient and medieval magic is symbolized by the *Testament of Solomon* which belongs to the same world of Hellenistic syncretism as the Greek magical papyri and also to the same period (A.D. 100-400), and yet is utterly different. Working with a common stock of traditions and beliefs, though rather more imbued with the dye of Christianity, this curious receptacle of current magical lore already showed that bias towards demonology which was to become of such paramount importance in medieval times. In fact, dressed up as an autobiography, it is nothing more nor less than a demonology itself; and although in its own way it is a good deal livelier and more attractive than later specimens of that art, the strange beauty, the magic, which haunts the papyri has vanished like smoke. Based on the Old Testament tale of Solomon and later Jewish folk-lore about the wise king, it tells in the first person the story of how the Temple was built by the aid of the demons subdued for that purpose by the arch-magician of legend. His power, his glory, and renown; the visit from the Queen from the South, explicitly called a witch; his final downfall into idolatry and consequent loss of power as well as other episodes and anecdotes form the narrative thread on to which, like curiously carved beads, the demons are strung one after the next, to fashion a magical rosary.

The action is set in motion by the vampire-devil Ornias, batten-  
ing on the blood of Solomon's favourite slave who was employed on the building of the Temple. The king prayed to God and was answered by the gift of a magic ring brought by Raphael. The stone was engraved with the pentalfa, and the ring had the power to subdue all demons. Beginning with Ornias, Solomon therefore summoned one after another of the fiends, constrained them to tell him their names, their powers and the particular angel who could thwart their evil designs. Each spirit in turn confessed along these lines, was set to work at the Temple or else imprisoned and thus

rendered harmless. The fifteen greater spirits interrogated derive from Persian, Hellenistic Greek, Jewish and Christian sources; they give fairly interesting and detailed accounts of their natures and functions; their personal appearance, hideous, therioform and composite, is also described; some of them prophesy future events: the downfall of Solomon, the destruction of the Temple, the coming of Christ; indeed the accuracy of some forecasts fulfilled in his own day was the reason (said Solomon) why he was now communicating the secret wisdom he had learnt for the benefit of mankind. Another transparent piece of propaganda for the *Testament* was the plausible explanation, given by Ornias, as to how the demons came by their foreknowledge. Nothing could be simpler. They merely mounted up into the heavens and listened to the sentences pronounced on the souls of men; but, having no foothold in those altitudes, they would often fall like lightning to the earth, appearing to men to be shooting stars. Foremost among them all is the arch-fiend Beelzeboul, of New Testament fame:

And I summoned again to stand before me *Beelzeboul*, the prince of demons, and I sat him down on a raised seat of honour, and said to him: 'Why art thou alone, prince of the demons?' And he said to me: 'Because I alone am left of the angels of heaven that came down. For I was first angel in the first heaven, being entitled *Beelzeboul*. And now I control all those who are bound in *Tartarus*...'.

I Solomon said unto him: '*Beelzeboul*, what is thy employment?' And he answered me: 'I destroy kings. I ally myself with foreign tyrants. And my own demons I set on to men, in order that the latter may believe in them and be lost. And the chosen servants of God, priests and faithful men, I excite unto desires for wicked sins, and evil heresies, and lawless deeds; and they obey me, and I bear them on to destruction. And I inspire men with envy, and murder, and for wars and sodomy, and other evil things. And I will destroy the world...' I said to him: 'Tell me by what angel thou art frustrated.' And he answered: 'By the holy and precious name of the Almighty God, called by the Hebrews by a row of numbers, of which the sum is 644, and among the Greeks it is *Emmanuel*. And if one of the Romans adjure me by the great name of the power Eleêth, I disappear at once.'

I Solomon was astounded when I heard this; and I ordered him to saw up Theban marbles. And when he began to saw the marbles, the other demons cried out with a loud voice, howling because of their king *Beelzeboul*.

But I Solomon questioned him, saying: 'If thou wouldst gain a respite, discourse to me about the things in heaven.' And *Beelzeboul* said: 'Hear, O king, if thou burn gum, and incense, and bulbs of the sea, with nard and saffron, and light seven lamps in an earthquake, thou wilt firmly fix thy house. And if, being pure, thou light them at dawn in the sun alight, then wilt thou see the heavenly dragons, how they wind themselves along and drag the chariot of the sun.' And I Solomon, having heard this, rebuked him, and said: 'Silence for the present, and continue to saw marbles as I commanded thee.'<sup>1</sup>

This is the nearest 'Solomon' ever came to the mystic visions of the papyri, considering such knowledge, to judge by his reception of it, to be in some unspecified way unlawful. Actually the *Testament* was much more interested in identifying the agents of evil and their angelic adversaries than in cosmic dreams. The fundamental optimism of magic is very much to the fore in this text. For Ornia, an incubus of a most sinister sort; Oneskelis, a succubus; the proud and disdainful Asmodeus, who prevents marriages and incites to adultery; Tephra, who brings darkness and sets fire to fields; the seven wicked sisters of the Pleiades; the envious Akephalos; the fearful Obizuth, all head and no limbs, who strangles and slaughters babes and children; all these terrible evil-doers can be brought to naught by pronouncing the angelic or divine name which confounds them and puts them to flight. It is the same story with the thirty-six *decami*, spirits of the Zodiac, who govern the different parts of the human body, or rather who attack them. For these are the demons of disease, diagnosed in the *Testament*, which uses the terms of Hippocrates and Galen for the sicknesses, but cites angels' names as antidotes, occasionally though rarely adding something in the nature of magical *materia medica*:

The third said: 'I am called *Arôtosael*. I do harm to eyes, and grievously injure them. Only let me hear the words, "*Uriel*, imprison *Aratosael*" [*sic*], at once I retreat.'...

The sixth said: 'I am called *Sphendonaël*. I cause tumours of the parotid gland, and inflammations of the tonsils, and tetanic recurvation. If I hear, "*Sabrael*, imprison *Sphendonaël*", at once I retreat.'...

And the ninth said: 'I am called *Kurtaël*. I send colics in the bowels. I induce pains. If I hear the words, "*Ioôth*, imprison *Kurtaël*", I at once retreat.'...

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Conybeare, 'The Testament of Solomon', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. XI, London, 1899, pp. 21 ff.



The twelfth said: 'I am called *Saphathoraël*, and I inspire partisanship in men, and delight in causing them to stumble. If any one will write on paper these names of angels, *Iaeô*, *Iealô*, *Iôlelet*, *Sabaôth*, *Ithoth*, *Bae*, and having folded it up, wear it round his neck or against his ear, I at once retreat and dissipate the drunken fit.' . . .

The sixteenth said: 'I am called *Atrax*. I inflict upon men fevers, irremediable and harmful. If you would imprison me, chop up coriander and smear it on the lips reciting the following charm: "The fever which is from dirt. I exorcise thee by the throne of the most high God, retreat from dirt and retreat from the creature fashioned by God." And at once I retreat.' . . .<sup>1</sup>

These *decani* entered the *Testament of Solomon* by way of Egypt and have all the appearance of being remote descendants of the disease-demons of the Akkadian-Chaldean inscriptions. They were about to fade away from magical literature; for in the *Sword of Moses*, written down about the tenth century A.D., there is a whole series of prescriptions and formulae using divine or angelic names in order to counteract all the ills which flesh is heir to, but no longer expressly attributing them to demons:

For cataract say the words of No. 11 [magical names] over oil of sesame, and anoint the eye with it during seven mornings. . . . For scabs, ulcers, itches, mange, shingles, etc., that befall mankind, say over olive oil No. 19 and anoint with the left hand. For jaundice say the words No. 20 over water in which radish has been soaked, and let him drink it.<sup>2</sup>

Gradually the focus of interest shifted from the aversion of evils which man was learning to cope with by other than magical means to the procuring of positive benefits from the infernal powers. In Recension C of the *Testament*, a list of fifty-one fiends from whom material and other boons could be wrested was included, bound up with a Greek copy of the *Key of Solomon*, probably an addition made in the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Whenever or however it was insinuated into the *Testament*, it symbolizes the change of heart undergone from the innocuous desire to avert or cure disease to the enrichment and pampering of the self. The names of the

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare, op. cit. pp. 35 ff.

<sup>2</sup> M. Gaster, *The Sword of Moses*, London, 1896, pp. 35 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. C. C. McCown, *The Testament of Solomon*, Leipzig, 1922, pp. 15 ff., 108.

fifty-one spirits listed in this infernal catalogue are always accompanied by hieroglyphic 'characters', necessary to bind them to do the magician's will, replacing the angelic host who warred against Beelzeboul and his cohorts and against the thirty-six *decani*. The powers attributed to the fifty-one are sometimes good, sometimes bad and nearly always trivial. Their names are for the most part grotesque and bizarre: Tsianphiel, Phazan, Napur, Dasarach, Ntarogan, Datzepher, Napalaixhan; although Mahoumet, Asmodeus, and Asteroth figure on the list and the termination -el is also represented. One of the features to be met with time and time again in other handbooks is a category of four spirits ruling over the points of the compass:

Oriens, ruler of the spirits of the East,  
 Amemon, ruler of the spirits of the South,  
 Eltzen, ruler of the spirits of the North,  
 Boul, ruler of the spirits of the West.

But in view of his later fame, Asiel, one of the magical angelic names in the papyri, deserves a special mention. He is here classed among the fiends, and certainly amongst the most rewarding ones, for he discovers stolen goods and detects thieves; but more important still, he reveals the exact position of treasures hidden underground. He bears a strong resemblance to the metallurgical gods of the Chaldeans, and I believe myself, in view of his subsequent history, that he was a lineal descendant of the midnight sun of the Akkadian cosmos.

Whether this particular surmise is correct or not, Assyrian and Babylonian elements clearly survived in the demons of disease described in the *Testament*. But the Christian author or editor was under many other debts quite apart from the Solomonic legend. Asmodeus derived from the Mazdian Aesma Daeva through the Book of Tobit. The Apocrypha, notably Enoch, was responsible for much of the demonology and angelology; the Talmud contributed the story of Orhias and the arts used by the demons to know the future. Egypto-Hellenic magic supplied information about Onoskelis, Akephalos Daimon, Enepsigos or Hecate and Kunopegos or Poseidon. Beelzeboul and Leontophoron, the demon of Gadara, derived from Christian-Jewish mythology. Gnosticism supplied the term *aeon*, although probably this was merely borrowed from the

papyri; there are also affiliations with Arabic folk-lore, to judge by similarities with the Koran and the *Arabian Nights*; unless we are to suppose that these two later works borrowed from the *Testament*, which, though possible, seems unlikely. But even without postulating Arabic elements, the eclecticism and syncretism of this magical treatise bear striking witness to one of the leading characteristics of the Art; its main importance, however, was the evolution of demonological lore into a recognizable *Book of the Spirits*, describing their functions and powers and the means to master them.

Such a list was by no means yet a hierarchy, even though Beelzeboul was named as prince, and the *decani* obviously ranked lower than Ornias and his consorts. It was chiefly owing to the speculations of the neo-Platonists that an infernal hierarchy gradually came into being. Porphyry (A.D. 233-304), who divided spirits simply into good and bad, nevertheless contributed the idea of a special category of fraudulent spirits, in order to meet the difficulty inherent in the assumption that great spirits can be constrained to appear by the will of man. Iamblichus (died A.D. 333), to whom this difficulty was non-existent, maintained in *The Mysteries* that such fraudulent spirits could only ape their betters if there had been some error in the rites; and he developed a complete descending hierarchy of the spirits, in which the good and the evil, the latter not totally black, were classified according to their greater or lesser degree of power and distance from human beings. In fact Plotinus' notion of the world-soul streaming down towards the earth and animating the universe was translated by Iamblichus into concrete terms. His pneumatology included the gods, radiating a beneficent light, stable and calm; archangels, powerful and mild; daimons, terrible and stormy, bringing movement and disorder; angels, graceful, charming and calm, only slightly stirred by motion; the princes of the elements, overwhelming in their calm stability; the princes of matter, repulsive, often dangerous, surrounded by tumult, but the dispensers of worldly wealth and powers; the heroes, milder than the daimons and yielding to movement; and finally the souls, the weakest and the most easily swayed into motion. The princes of the elements and the princes of matter resemble in some sort the seven planetary gods and their corresponding demons of the Akkadian cosmos. Iamblichus despite his

lofty language was drawn more strongly towards magic than towards mysticism and was more intent on bringing gods and daimons down to us than on rising into the sphere of the gods; he was also interested in communicating with evil spirits as well as with good ones. Proclus (A.D. 412-84) concentrated on the elemental aspect introduced by Iamblichus, and divided the daimons into five classes, ruling over fire, air, water, earth and those housing underground. Psellus, who died in 1106, adopted this classification, and added the category of *Lucifugum*, or Fly-the-light. Trithem (1462-1516) in his *Liber Octo Quaestionum* characterized these spirits in a very vivid way. The fire-spirits, dwelling in the upper regions until the Day of Judgement, have no commerce of any kind with men; the air-spirits, grim and violent, hate human beings and raise storms; the earth-spirits inhabit woods and groves; some of them are quite friendly to men, but others are the reverse; the water-spirits are full of wrath and passions; they generally manifest in a female form; the subterranean spirits are the most malicious of all. They attack miners and those digging for treasure; they provoke earthquakes; they are known to have lured men underground; they seize and guard buried treasures; they feign to be the souls of the dead. The Fly-the-lights finally are '... a sort wandering in darkness, a mysterious kind of demon, dark through and through, malicious, restless, stormy'.<sup>1</sup>

Paracelsus (1493-1541) in his fascinating monograph, *De nymphis, sylphis, pygmeis et salamandris*, which was permeated through and through by Germanic folk-lore, called the elemental spirits 'the flower of the elements', and denied their possession of a soul. But this idea, of which Grimmelshausen and later Fontane made poetical capital in two diametrically opposite ways, was naturally not one which could fruitfully be used by magic, whether black or white.

Running parallel with such quasi-philosophical reflexions was the ritual development of the infernal hierarchy initiated in the *Testament of Solomon*. There are several allusions to such compilations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and they were always attributed to Solomon. Trithem mentioned a *Liber Officiorum* on the lines of the *Testament*, including four emperors, many kings, dukes, marquises and counts. Wierus published under the title

<sup>1</sup> J. Trithem, *Liber Octo Quaestionum*, Oppenheim, 1575; I. iii. verso.

*Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* a catalogue of sixty-nine devils with their offices and functions. Although the names are dissimilar to those of Recension C of the *Testament*, they include the kings of the east, south, north and west (AMAYMON, GERSON, ZYMYMAR, GOAP) and follow the general pattern of that list. Scot reprinted Wierus in his *Discouerie of Witchcraft* in 1584; and the French *grimoire*-writers nearly all have similar lists as will be seen later. A manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge (late fifteenth or early sixteenth century), contains a *Livre des Esprits*, including among the forty-two demons ORIENT, king of the east, PAYMON of the west (the latter figures in *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* in another capacity), AMOYMON of the south, and CHAM of the north. A manuscript in the British Museum called the *Lemegeton* or *Lesser Key of Solomon* has an infernal hierarchy of seventy-two demons, published by Waite in his *Book of Black Magic*, which tallies very closely indeed with *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*. One way and another therefore the *Liber Spirituum* of medieval and modern magic connects closely with the *Testament of Solomon*.

### (b) *The Kabbala*

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.<sup>1</sup>

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters.

And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the

<sup>1</sup> Genesis vi. 1-5.

children of men and beget us children.' And Semjâzâ, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear ye will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone will have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' Then sware they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon, because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And these are the names of their leaders: Sêmîazâz, their leader, Arâkîba, Râmêêl, Kôkabîêl, Tâmiêl, Râmiêl, Dânêl, Êzêqêêl, Barâqîjâl, Asâêl, Armârôs, Batârêl, Anânêl, Zaqîêl, Samsâpêêl, Satarêl, Tûrêl, Jômjâêl, Sariêl. These are their chiefs of tens.

And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, The giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones. And Azâzêl taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals (of the earth) and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways. Semjâzâ taught enchantments, and root-cuttings, 'Armârôs the resolving of enchantments, Barâqîjâl (taught) astrology, Kôkabêl the constellations, Êzêqêêl the knowledge of the clouds, (Araqîêl the signs of the earth, Shamsiêl the signs of the sun), and Sariêl the course of the moon.<sup>1</sup>

These two important passages, the first giving rise to the second, were responsible for one of the myths of the origin of the Kabbala. Although betrayed to men, and then guiltily abused, the occult knowledge which the fallen angels communicated was divine

<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Enoch*, ed. and tr. Charles, Oxford, 1912, pp. 13-20 (chapters 6-9).

wisdom, which according to the Kabbalists had been hidden in veiled language in the books of the Old Testament. It could be rediscovered by symbolical interpretation; and this was one of the methods employed in searching out the secrets of the scriptures. The Babylonian Talmud, however, set a different myth in circulation, which freed the occult knowledge sought for from the taint of spiritual sin adhering to the first. According to this tradition, Jahweh had communicated the secret doctrine to Moses on Mount Sinai for the elect only. The seventy elders had been initiated into it, and thereafter it was handed down orally from father to son. It was also committed to writing in cipher in the Pentateuch, hidden in the words themselves, where the Kabbalists have sought and are still seeking divine and ineffable wisdom. This was also partially revealed in the *Sepher Jezirah* (the Book of the Origin) and the *Zohar* (Light, Brilliance). These are works of abstruse, mystical and theosophical speculations, which probably entered Jewish thought during the Babylonian captivity; and since they did not harmonize with the doctrines of the Old Testament, the Kabbalists set themselves to discover the hidden meaning which, as *Zohar* plainly hinted, underlay the ostensible one. Apart from symbolical interpretations, three chief cryptogrammic methods were used.

The first, called *Gematria*, was based on the fact that every one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical value. One word could therefore be substituted for another, provided that the numerical total was the same; and as the Hebrew alphabet has no vowels, the results admitted of great variations. By *Gematria*, the sentence in Genesis xviii. 2: 'And behold three men', yields: 'These are Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.'

The second method, *Notarikon*, formed sentences from words, by taking every letter in a given word as the initial letter of another; or conversely formed new words from the initial or final letter of every word in a sentence. Thus 'Aieth Gadol Leolam Adonai' (Adonai will be great to eternity) produced the magico-mystical name for God, AGLA, which haunts the ritual texts. Very much in evidence too is the Schemhamphoras, the seventy-two divine or angelic names. These were arrived at by observation of the fact that verses 19, 20 and 21 of Exodus xiv each consisted of exactly seventy-two letters. This arrested Kabbalistic attention; and as verse 19 contained the words: 'The angel of the LORD', the

assumption that angelic names were hidden in the text amounted almost to a certainty. By writing the three verses one below the other (the first from left to right, the second from right to left, and the third from left to right again) seventy-two vertical rows of three consonants each were formed, and these were converted into names by interpolating vowels and adding the suffixes -al, -el or -jah. Thus VHV became Vehuiah; SJT Sitael; MHS Mahasiah, and so on.

There was also a highly complicated method of almost infinite permutations and combinations called *Temura*, by means of which the Kabbalists broke down the cipher messages of Jahweh which refused to yield to *Gematria* or *Notarikon*; for ciphers were suspected everywhere in the sacred scriptures; and indeed at one time the belief was rife that the whole of the Old Testament was a combination of divine and hidden names. The discovery and use of these names of power formed what has been called the practical Kabbala, a veritable storehouse for magicians:

With the assistance of this mysterious science a man could master all the spirits that flit like shadows through the universe: could obtain the services of the angels, perform the most astounding deeds. Such was the meaning attached to this science and the awe which the Kabbalist inspired was far superior to that which the wizard or magician inspired. For the Kabbalist owed his power to the knowledge which was vouchsafed to him through the study of sacred writings, whilst the wizard or magician was suspected of some unholy compact with the Master of Darkness. This at once shows that even in the darkest ages of superstition and blind belief, Kabbala was never associated with evil purposes, nor the Kabbalist with some mysterious dark power. He was credited with having penetrated the mysteries of this world by almost a special grace of God; through some holy agency the veil that covers everything had been lifted for him.<sup>1</sup>

The line drawn here between the white Kabbalist and the black magician is as arbitrary as all attempted classifications of magic under rubrics are doomed to be; white and black are continually mingling and fertilizing each other; and the ineffable names of the Kabbala were used and misused by the magical confraternity quite as profusely as those of the divinities of Egypt, Greece and Christendom. The holier the names, the more powerful they were supposed to be; and even the divine appellations of the Kabbalistic

<sup>1</sup> M. Gaster, *The Origin of the Kabbala*, Ramsgate, 1894, p. 15.



*Sephiroth* did not escape magical pollution. This fundamental doctrine of the emanations of God from Ain Soph (the Illimitable One) through Kether, the Crown; Binah, Understanding; Chokmah, Wisdom; Geburah, Strength; Chesed, Pity; Hod, Greatness; Netzach, Victory; Jesod, Foundation; Malkuth, Kingdom, supplied Jewish mystics with food for enraptured contemplation and their philosophers with matter for abstruse speculations. But it also ministered to the insatiable demand for names of power inherent in the very nature of magic. By connecting a particular name for God with each of His emanations (JAH, JEHOVAH, EL, ELOHIM, JEHOD, ELOHA, SABAOTH, SHADAI, ADONAI), it delivered these sacred symbols into the hands of sorcerers; and most eagerly of course was grasped the one about which there seemed to be the most mystery. A great and almost impenetrable mystery had indeed gradually grown up round the name which to us seems the most familiar of all, even though its pronunciation has shifted in our own day: Jehovah or Jahweh. Represented by the letters JHVH (Yod He Vau He), it seems at first to have been openly spoken. But a time came when, possibly owing to the mystery-mongering about divine names in Egypt and Babylonia, the Hebrew priests refrained from pronouncing it, and substituted ADONAI (Lord) when they read the sacred texts out loud. The Jewish people followed their lead; and, because of the absence of vowels from the Hebrew alphabet, the original pronunciation was finally forgotten and not rediscovered until A.D. 300 or thereabouts. It was the Kabbalists who emphasized the mystery surrounding the letters JHVH by referring to the name they represented as the 'word of four letters', TETRAGRAMMATON, and this caught on like wild-fire in the magical texts. Few indeed and far between are those modern rituals in which that awe-inspiring name does not occupy the place of honour.

It is not one of the many bizarre appellations to be found in the *Sword of Moses*, which may have been pre-Kabbalistic in origin; but this text nevertheless illustrates particularly vividly the strange hold which cipher-language has always had over the Jewish mind, and which has rendered the obscurity and complexity of magical names still more hopeless to disentangle. There are well over a hundred and forty divine or angelic ineffable names in this treatise; but the majority, according to Gaster, defy translitera-

tion. The following passages, however, throw some light on the mental gymnastics involved in composing them:

...and these are the Ineffable names and their surnames: Spirit Piskonnit, kunya, X; Atimon, kunya, X; Piskon (?), Hugron, kunya, X; Sanigron, kunya, X; Msi, kunya, X; Mokon, kunya, X; Astm, kunya, X; Sktm, kunya, X; Ihoaiel, kunya, X; Iofiel, kunya, X; Ssnialiah, kunya, X; Kngielah, kunya, X; Zabdiel, kunya, X. I conjure thee with these fourteen names, by which all the secrets and mysteries and signs are sealed and accomplished, and which are the foundations of heaven and earth.<sup>1</sup>

I further call thee with the greatest of thy Names, the pleasant and beloved one, which is the same as that of thy Master, save one letter, with which He created and formed everything, and which He placed as a seal upon all the work of His hand; and this is its equivalent—X, and the other in the language of purity (permutations of the letters Yod, He) is read so—X. I conjure thee with the right hand of sanctity and with His beloved Name, in whose honour everything has been created, and all are terror-struck by His mighty arm, and all the sons of the internal heavenly cohort tremble and shake of His fear, which is X, and its equivalent by means of JHVH is X...in the name X, Lord, most high and holy, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel's battalions; in the name of the holy living Creatures, and in the name of the Wheels of the Chariot, and in the name of the river of fire, Ih, Ziin, and all His ministers, and in the name of IH, Ziin, Sabaoth, Z, El Z, Shaddai Z, X revealed Himself on Mount Sinai in the glory of His majesty.<sup>2</sup>

These names were held to be omnipotent over both good spirits and evil ones; and to be exceedingly terrible:

And if you should refuse me, I will hand you over to the Lord God and to his Ineffable name, whose wrath and anger and fire are kindled, who honours his creatures with one letter of his name, and is called X; so that if you refuse he will destroy you, and you will not be found when searched after.<sup>3</sup>

With these Names, terrible and mighty, which darken the sun, and obscure the moon, and turn the sea, and break the rocks, and extinguish

<sup>1</sup> Gaster, *The Sword of Moses*, p. 49. Kunya is the surname; X stands for names which have not been transliterated.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 50f.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 30; an invocation to Azliel, Arel, Ta'aniel, Tafel, Yofiel Mittron, Yadiel, Ra'asiel, Haniel, Haniel, Asrael, Yisriel, A'shael, Amuhael, Asrael, the lords of the 'Sword'.

the light, I conjure you, spirits, and . . . Shiddim, and Satanim, that you depart and disappear from N, son of N.<sup>1</sup>

The affiliations between Kabbalism and Gnosticism are notoriously very close, for indeed the Gnosis not only derived from but also entered into every contemporary doctrine and religious or mystical system. As regards the Ineffable Name, it out-clamoured (as was its custom) even the Kabbala:

If anyone knows that Name when he goes out of the material body, neither smoke nor darkness, neither Archon, angel, or archangel, would be able to hurt the soul which knows that Name. And if it be spoken by anyone going out from the world and said to the fire, it will be extinguished; and to the darkness, it will disappear; and if it be said to the demons and to the satellites of the external darkness, to its Archons, and to its lords and powers, they will all perish, and their flame will burn them so that they exclaim: 'Thou art holy, Thou art holy, the Holy of all the Holy.' And if that Name is said to the judges of the wicked, and to their lords and all their powers, and to Barbelo and the invisible God, and to the three Gods of triple power, as soon as that Name is uttered in those regions they will fall one upon the other, so that being destroyed they perish and exclaim: 'Light of all the Lights, who art in the infinite lights, have mercy upon us and purify us.'<sup>2</sup>

Magicians did rather more than borrow ineffable names from the Kabbala. The *Zohar* first became known in Europe in the thirteenth century, when a poor Jew, Moses Leon, brought it to Spain. From then onwards Kabbalism has never ceased to exert an incalculable influence upon occultists of every description. The Kabbalistic tree, which gives the *Sephiroth* in a tabular form, and the doctrine that the invisible can be known by analogy from the visible ('as below, so above') have led to abysmally abstruse speculations, to the most extravagant flights of fancy and to the most fine-spun theories; for the obscurity of the language of *Zohar* as well as the pantheism underlying the doctrine of the emanations have had an almost intoxicating effect on the minds of mystics, mystagogues and magicians, as the language of Eliphas Lévi, who was a combination of all three, amply testifies:

On penetrating into the sanctuary of the Kabalah one is seized with admiration in the presence of a doctrine so logical, so simple and at the

<sup>1</sup> Gaster, *The Sword of Moses*: p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 14; quoting from *Pistis Sophia*, ed. Schwartz, p. 236.

same time so absolute. The essential union of ideas and signs; the consecration of the most fundamental realities by primitive characters; the trinity of words, letters and numbers; a philosophy simple as the alphabet, profound and infinite as the Word; theorems more complete and luminous than those of Pythagoras; a theology which may be summed up on the fingers; an infinite which can be held in the hollow of an infant's hand; ten figures and twenty-two letters, a triangle, a square and a circle: such are the elements of the Kabbalah. Such also are the component principles of the written Word, reflexion of that spoken Word which created the world! All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabbalah and return therein. Whatsoever is grand or scientific in the religious dreams of the illuminated, of Jacob Böhme, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin and the rest, is borrowed from the Kabbalah; all Masonic Associations owe to it their secrets and their symbols. The Kabbalah alone consecrates the alliance of universal reason and the Divine Word; it establishes, by the counterpoise of two forces in apparent opposition, the eternal balance of being; it alone reconciles reason with faith, power with liberty, science with mystery: it has the keys of the present, past and future!<sup>1</sup>

The hoary (though mythical) antiquity of the Kabbala, fathered on the fallen angels and also on Moses, was another reason which recommended it to magicians; for magic, always conscious of a remote and glorious golden age, seeks in the distant past and its memorials for the secrets of knowledge, wisdom and power. This is why magical rituals have been ascribed, from time immemorial, to sages as far removed in time as was compatible with the survival of their memory. In the fifteenth century books of magical secrets and ritual processes were attributed to Adam (*Sepher Raziel*), Abel, Noah, Joseph, Moses, Solomon, Reuben, Enoch, Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Virgil and Mahomet, to mention only the most outstanding and popular. This custom has persisted until to-day, and moved Waite to scholarly but uncritical wrath:

Back-dating and imputed authorship are the two crying sins of magical hand-books.... There never was a literature so founded on forgery as that of Magic.... Knavish methods... have ruled the manufacture of most magical books.... A literature which has done nothing but ascribe falsely....<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, tr. Waite, London, n.d., pp. 24f.

<sup>2</sup> A. E. Waite, *The Book of Black Magic*, London, 1898, *passim*.

These false ascriptions and antedatings, if they are symptoms of the fundamental delusiveness of magic, also witness to its reverence for age, authority and tradition. The individual claims are invalid; but the antiquity of magic and its supremacy in ancient times are matters of historical fact. Venerable indeed as well as many and diverse were the strands woven into the rope with which medieval and modern magicians hoped to draw into their sphere the unknown powers around them; deities and demons from Babylon, Egypt, Persia, Palestine and Greece; magic names spoken in the dawn of time in languages now dead and gone; others taken from a ghost-speech which had never existed in reality; ritual processes enacted through countless ages and fixed in high perfection before the birth of Christ; pagan practices; Eastern mysticism; Hebrew folk-lore; Christian theology; apocalyptic angelology and demonology; Kabbalistic symbolism; neo-Platonic philosophy. All this (not to mention the considerable part played by astrology in the rituals of magic nor the presence of ritual elements in the experiments of alchemy) was assimilated well or ill, partially or totally misunderstood, mangled, mutilated, corrupted, but still there in the quasi-modern rituals which have found their way into print. Superficially considered, these appear to be a mass of unintelligible nonsense which it would be a waste of time to examine closely. But a patient scrutiny reveals much of great interest buried underneath the rubbish on the top. A philosophy underlies the rituals; and beneath these mounds of folly are remnants of ancient civilizations.

## PART II. MEDIEVAL AND MODERN RITES AND CEREMONIES

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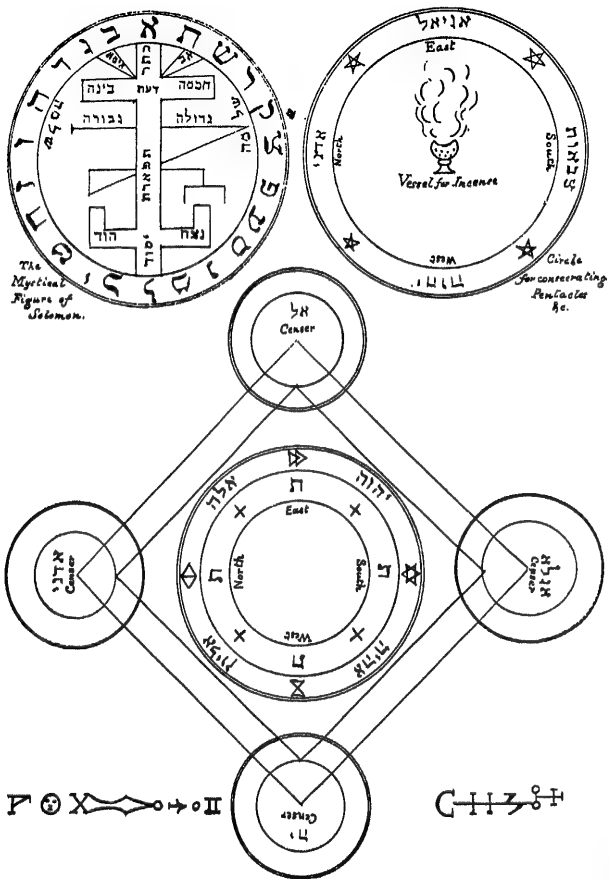
- (a) Harrowing Hell
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The mystical figure of Solomon, Circle for consecrating pentacles, and other diagrams.

## CHAPTER I

### THE SOLOMONIC CYCLE

#### (a) *The Clavicles*

It is no more than Solomon's due that his is the name which carries the guns in the rituals of ceremonial magic; for his world-wide reputation as the master of legions of spirits has endured for at least two thousand years. The Wise King of the Bible, the Talmud and the Koran; the hero of the *Arabian Nights*, of Firdausi's *Suleiman Namah* and of countless other poems and tales; the author of *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, the *Song of Songs* and *Wisdom* was rumoured throughout the East and West to have left behind him secret books of magic. For only magic could account for the power, the glory and the riches associated with his name. Moreover the ambiguous light shed by the Old Testament over the great king in his declining years, when he loved strange women and followed after strange gods, enveloped him in that atmosphere of mystery and guilt which vastly enhances the prestige of practising magicians, about whom something holy and unholy perpetually revolves. So that it is doubtful at least if the rituals attributed to Solomon would have carried the spiritual underworld by storm as they did if no breath of things unlawful had ever tarnished his name.

The tradition, early established, struck deep roots. Josephus in the first century of our era mentioned a book of incantations for summoning demons circulating under the name of Solomon, and described how a Jew called Eleazar used it to cure cases of possession. This may have been the *Testament*, but was more probably a different work. Psellus in the eleventh century spoke of a treatise on stones and demons composed by Solomon, probably *Salomonis libri de gemmis et daemonibus* mentioned by Glycas. The thirteenth-century Byzantine historian, Nicetas Choniates, recounted how a book attributed to the same author was in the possession of Aaron Isaac, interpreter to the emperor Manuel Commenus. Roger Bacon (died 1292) knew the magical works circulating under Solomon's name and emphatically denied this authorship; and about 1350 a book entitled *Le Livre de Salomon*, filled with rules for invoking



demons, was burned by the orders of Pope Innocent VI. In 1456 Hartlieb in a warning pamphlet addressed to Duke John of Burgundy listed the *Sigillum Salomonis* and the *Clavicula Salomonis* among the works of nigromancy current at the time. Tritheim in *Antipalus Maleficiorum* (c. 1500) mentioned the editions of the *Clavicle* made by 'Abano', 'Picatrix' and 'Almadel'; also a *Lamene* or *Lamen* attributed to Solomon, and his *De Officio Spirituum* ('execrable and entirely diabolic', probably the same as Wierus' *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*); further the *Liber Salomonis de Novem Candariis* and the *Liber Salomonis de Tribus Figuris*. Besides the *Testament* there were also known a *Herbarium Salomonis*, a *Hygromantia Salomonis*, a *Liber de Throno Salomonis* and a *Schemhamphoras Salomonis Regis*.

Amongst this welter of Solomonic magical wisdom the *Key of Solomon* has occupied the place of honour in the minds of practising magicians from the fourteenth century onwards, and many and various are the extant manuscript versions. Their great rarity in print is not due entirely to fear of desecration, nor to fear of prosecution, although both may well have played and still may play a part in the general reluctance to publish magical rituals. But the real deterrent lies in the fact that printed texts are useless. They must be copied out by the exorcist himself with a consecrated pen on consecrated paper; and more confidence has generally been felt in making such copies from the personal manuscript of a magician of repute than from printed texts, whose origin must always be extremely doubtful. The forgery of magical manuscripts has therefore naturally figured as a remunerative side-line of the industry. There are many manuscripts of the *Key of Solomon* in the great libraries; there are probably hundreds in private collections and in the possession of individuals all over Europe. In 1903 Hermann Gollancz described a Hebrew version in his possession and published a facsimile of it in 1914 with an introduction and a table of contents, also quoting from it at length. He dated it 1700 or thereabouts, and believed that it was copied from an older version. He vouched for the 'perfectly Jewish' tone of the prayers, whilst discerning other elements in the conjurations and elsewhere. This particular text differs radically from the one established by Mathers in 1889 from seven codices: one in sixteenth-century Latin, one in Italian and five in French, all in the British Museum. As far as I

can judge, Gollancz' manuscript is later in date, considerably more elaborate and less homogeneous. In any case it can hardly have exercised much influence on the rituals of Europe, the authors of which were clearly not Hebrew scholars. McCown mentions a Greek version in the British Museum which he thinks belongs to the twelfth or thirteenth century. Grillot de Givry<sup>1</sup> gives some account of the French manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. They resemble those edited by Mathers closely but are all later in date. Finally C. J. S. Thompson<sup>2</sup> describes and quotes from an English manuscript of the sixteenth century in the British Museum, which takes a rather independent line, but follows the pattern of Mathers' edition by and large. There are also said to be one or two manuscript German copies, but I know nothing further of these. In the form given by Mathers, translated into English and unfortunately expurgated by him of the blacker portions, it would seem to be a work dating from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. This is the text which I am using in the following account of the most famous of all the magical rituals known.

Two of the seven codices from which Mathers' edition is made have pseudo-historical introductions, embodying 'Solomon's' parting words to his son Roboam. These are based on the dream described in Kings and Chronicles, in which Solomon prayed for an understanding heart and was granted in addition riches and honour 'that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee'. According to one of the codices, the *Clavicle*, buried in Solomon's sepulchre in obedience to his instructions to Roboam, was rediscovered in later ages by certain Babylonian philosophers, who could make nothing of it until one, more worthy than the others, was enlightened by an angel after praying to God. In the other introduction 'Solomon' utters this solemn warning to Roboam:

If thou dost not intend to use for a good purpose the secrets which I here teach thee, I command thee rather to cast this Testament into the fire, than to abuse the power thou wilt have of constraining the Spirits, for I warn thee that the beneficent Angels, wearied and fatigued by thine

<sup>1</sup> *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, tr. Courtenay Locke, London, 1931, pp. 95 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mysteries and Secrets of Magic*, London, 1927, pp. 229 ff.

illicit demands, would to thy sorrow execute the commands of God, as well as to that of all such who, with evil intent, would abuse those secrets which He hath given and revealed unto me.<sup>1</sup>

This good advice would, if adopted, render a large part of the manual of very doubtful value, as will be seen; but Mathers was even more emphatic about the risks involved:

In editing this volume I have omitted one or two experiments partaking largely of Black Magic.... I must further caution the practical worker against the use of blood; the prayer, the pentacle, and the perfumes, rightly used, are sufficient; and the former verges dangerously on the evil path. Let him who, in spite of the warnings of this volume, determines to work evil, be assured that that evil will recoil on himself and that he will be struck by the reflex current.<sup>2</sup>

As 'Solomon' often advocated the use of blood for his operations, and as he stated that to omit any of his instructions would be to defeat the exorcist's end, those who listened to Mathers would find the value of the *Clavicle* still further diminished; both writers were shifting responsibility on to the shoulders of the operator.

Gollancz said of his text that the prayers were 'perfectly Jewish in tone'. The same impression predominates in Mathers' edition. Not only does the influence of the Kabbala predominate in the names, the invocations, the inscriptions of the circles and pentacles and in the astrological tables, but the indefinable aroma of the east permeates the whole. The ritual ablutions, purifications and suffumigations, the pomp and circumstance of the ceremonial, the intricate and decorative detail displayed in the pentacles, the profound patience presupposed in the preparations and manifest in the conjurations point to an oriental origin, in which the Old Testament and the Kabbala, Hellenized astrology and gypsy lore have become intertwined and entangled. There is a reference to the crystal sea which indicates familiarity with the Apocalypse; and Mathers has extricated from a hopelessly jumbled series of Hebrew letters the names AB, BENRUACH, HA QUADOSCH, or Father, Son and Holy Spirit; but otherwise no Christian elements are discernible in the *Clavicle*.

The practical portion given in Part II is of a nature to daunt the heart of the stoutest magician unless he is also a highly skilled

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, ed. Mathers, London, 1889, p. 6.   <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. vi.

craftsman, imbued through and through as well with the love of God; for only such can hope to obtain power over the spirits. He must also be possessed of high and unshakeable courage, for the operations he has to perform are both frightening and dangerous, and peril surrounds him on all sides:

ZAZAII, ZAMAIL, PUIDAMON Most Powerful, SEDON Most Strong, EL, YOD HE VAU HE, IAH, AGLA, assist me an unworthy sinner who have had the boldness to pronounce these Holy Names which no man should name and invoke save in very great danger. Therefore have I recourse unto these Most Holy Names, being in great peril both of soul and of body. Pardon me if I have sinned in any manner, for I trust in Thy protection alone, especially on this journey.<sup>1</sup>

This is the prayer the operator is advised to repeat in a low and distinct voice whilst making his way to the place of invocations; and it certainly suggests that he is about to embark on a very hazardous undertaking. Intelligence and accuracy are also needful; for unless he carries out every detail of the minute instructions given, he will not only utterly fail in his purpose, but may bring ruin and destruction upon himself and upon his companions. In the *Clavicle* companions are essential to the ceremony: three, five, seven or nine excluding the exorcist; if none can be found, a little boy or girl must be pressed into the service; and if all else fails a faithful and devoted dog should accompany him. The chief rôle of the human assistants seems to have been to carry the instruments to the spot, to light the brazier and generally to prepare the ground. They were allowed to join in the confession, although in scarcely audible voices; but otherwise they stood about like mutes, often exhorted and encouraged by the master. Probably their presence was beneficial to his *morale*, and also served them as an apprenticeship to the Art. They often figure in other rituals, and always in the same guise as acolytes. 'Solomon' expressly states that they must go through all the initial ceremonies laid down for the exorcist-in-chief.

These include a preliminary period of nine days during which strict chastity and increasingly severe abstinence must be observed; complicated ablutions, fervent meditations, prayers, a confession of a most abject nature featuring all the crimes in the calendar and the

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 84.

recital of psalms complete the spiritual discipline to be undergone. A propitious time for the great work in hand must be chosen with the help of the astrological tables and directions in the text, and also a suitable place:

The places best fitted for exercising and accomplishing Magical Arts and Operations are those which are concealed, removed and separated from the habitations of men. Wherefore desolate and uninhabited regions are most appropriate, such as the borders of lakes, forests, dark and obscure places, old and deserted houses, whither rarely and scarce ever men do come; mountains, caves, caverns, grottos, gardens, orchards; but best of all are cross-roads, and where four roads meet, during the depth and silence of the night.<sup>1</sup>

It might almost be a romantic poet speaking; but 'Solomon', nothing if not practical, spoils the effect by adding that the magician's own house or chamber will do if more convenient, or indeed anywhere else, provided that it has been properly purified and consecrated. The person of the exorcist (and of his disciples) being clean within and without, he must don pure priest-like garments of linen cloth, the thread of which has been spun by a young maiden, with certain characters embroidered upon the breast in scarlet, white leather shoes similarly inscribed, and a crown bearing divine names. Even more important if possible, he must be provided with pentacles (or medals) for his protection:

The Medals or Pentacles, which we make for the purpose of striking terror into the Spirits and reducing them to obedience, have besides this wonderful and excellent virtue. If thou invokest the Spirits by virtue of these Pentacles, they will obey thee without repugnance, and having considered them they will be struck with astonishment, and will fear them, and thou shalt see them so surprised by fear and terror, that none of them will be sufficiently bold to wish to oppose thy will... for the safety both of soul and of body, the Master and the Companions should have the Pentacles before their breasts, consecrated, and covered with a silken veil, and perfumed with the proper fumigations. By the which being assured and encouraged, they may enter into the matter without fear or terror, and they shall be exempt and free from all perils and dangers....<sup>2</sup>

A whole section is devoted to the composition and inscription of these pentacles, and a diagram given for each of the forty-four

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 56 and 78.

described (seven consecrated to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and the Sun respectively, five each to Venus and Mercury and six to the Moon); and Mathers spent years restoring to the best of his ability the mangled Hebrew letters, names and mystical characters, a task of immense difficulty, but essential if the *Clavicle* was to be of practical value to the adept of magic. Quite apart from the construction of the pentacles, in itself a delicate and laborious affair, the intending magician has meanwhile also been making, exorcizing, consecrating, asperging, fumigating and perfuming all the many and various instruments of the Art. Like his person which has been purified by ablutions, fastings and prayers, his tools must be similarly hallowed; and in order to be quite sure that they have never been debased by profane use, they must be created for the purpose.

The magician of the school of Solomon must therefore forge his own sword, knives, poniard and lancet, and fit them with handles made and engraved with the appropriate characters by himself. He must cut, fashion and inscribe his own wand and staff; make his own needles and shape his own pen. He must mix his own inks, compound his own perfumes and incense, construct his own inkwell and aspergillus. He must mould his own candles from virgin earth dug up by his own hands, or from wax taken from bees who had never made it before. Moreover, awkward conditions are attached to all these operations. They must be performed under the right planetary aspects; the steel to be forged must be tempered in the blood of a magpie, or of a gosling, or of a mole, according to the particular instrument required, and in the juice of the herb mercury or pimpernel. The knife-handles must be made of box-wood cut with a new sword at one blow; the wand of virgin hazel must be obtained in similar circumstances. The pen must be shaped from the third feather of the right wing of a male goose; and so forth and so on, almost it would seem *ad infinitum*.

When all these instruments are ready at last and reverently put aside to await their hour in a special silken cloth embroidered with divine names, the magician's labours are still not done; in fact, the hardest now lies before him. Smith, engraver, druggist and craftsman, he must be butcher and tanner too. For a male kid or lamb must now be sacrificed in order to procure the virgin parchment or vellum for the pentacles. In some rituals the parchment is also

necessary for the magic circle. The actual slaughter of the victim was not described by 'Solomon', or if it was, Mathers omitted the passage; the sage merely remarked that a male kid or lamb was necessary. But this utilitarian killing had a strong ritual element behind it. The idea of sacrifice almost inevitably crept in or crept back; and the beast came to be called the Victim of the Art. It was slain in some Solomonic rites to the words: 'I, N., slay thee, N., in the name and to the honour of N.'. As the last N. stood for the spirit to be invoked, blood-sacrifice was clearly intended in addition to the procuring of the parchment. The slaughtered beast must now be skinned and the tanning of the hide was the next item on the magical programme. This highly technical operation was rendered still more irksome by the necessary secrecy, the consecration of the salt and other materials, by the innumerable incantations, fumigations, psalms and prayers accompanying this as indeed all other manual actions the magician had to perform in addition to the careful observance of the planetary aspects.

The almost incredible complications and elaborations of these initial rites and ceremonies, of which I have given only the slightest sketch, read like the worst sort of obstacle-race. They are certainly calculated to deal the death-blow to any notions harboured by intending practitioners that magic is a short cut to their desires. On the contrary it appears here in the light of a severe discipline both on the mystical and the practical side; and those who have ever attended Hindu rites and ceremonies will recognize the similarity of an outlook which transforms all the actions of every-day life into an act of worship. Would-be sorcerers might well pause before embarking on the path traced out for them by 'Solomon'; but could comfort themselves with the reflexion that the results would be in proportion to the effort expended. And when they failed, they would be unlikely to blame their mentor. For they could never be quite sure that they had not deviated at some point or other from his sometimes ambiguous instructions. They could try, try and try again until they died of senile decay without losing hope and without losing faith in 'Solomon'. But both the God-fearing and the graceless must have been in a state of great nervous tension and fatigue when they came at last to the actual rite of conjuration.

As reproduced by Mathers, this might prove to be inordinately long and terribly exhausting. On the other hand, should the spirits

be brought to manifest at any of the successive stages in the proceedings when the magician is told to expect them, it might be either greatly or slightly curtailed. It begins with the tracing of the magic circle with the knife of the Art, a complicated and intricate figure, meticulously described and illustrated by a diagram, which reproduces as well the inscriptions (Kabbalistic names for God) it should contain. The rules for its purification and fumigation are also carefully given. Within this protective boundary the exorcist then proceeds to utter the prayers, the invocations or addresses, the conjurations, the confession (which has already been made once during the initial rites), a separate address to the angels, a curse for rebellious spirits and the licenses to depart. The whole runs into roughly 10,000 words and increases in urgency, eloquence and vehemence as time goes on and the spirits still refuse to obey. Nine times during the performance they are announced as certain (or almost certain) to appear and to be seen approaching from all sides. Nine times it is nevertheless acknowledged with growing reluctance that, for one reason or another, they may after all not come. The measures taken to force them to do so increase in ferocity as do also the conjurations. Stabbing the air towards the quarter whence they are expected is recommended several times; twice the circle has to be reformed and the terrifying pentacles uncovered. The disciples must be exhorted and encouraged not to lose heart; and the spirits themselves must be threatened with dire penalties, ranging from leprosy to appalling and eternal torments, unless they manifest at once.

Their tardiness is to blame for this; for the conjurations open in a calm and dignified manner without any menace after a very fine prayer:

After having said all these words devoutly, let the Master arise, and place his hands upon the Pentacles, and let one of the Companions hold the Book open before the Master, who, raising his eyes to heaven, and turning unto the Four Quarters of the Universe, shall say:

O Lord, be Thou unto me a Tower of Strength against the appearance and assaults of the Evil Spirits.

After this, turning towards the Four Quarters of the Universe, he shall say the following words:—

These be the Symbols and the Names of the Creator, which can bring Terror and Fear unto you. Obey me then, by the power of these Holy Names, and by these Mysterious Symbols of the Secret of Secrets.



The which being said and done, thou shalt see them draw near and approach from all parts. But if they be hindered, detained, or occupied in some way, so that they cannot come, or if they are unwilling to come, then. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In this first case, nothing worse will happen than the reforming of the circle, the stabbing of the air, the confession by the Master and his companions, another prayer, and the repetition of the first conjuration. Should this fail of its effect a second time, the spirits must then be adjured at some length by the nine names of the *Sephiroth*, given here as: EHEIEH, IOD, TETRAGRAMMATON ELOHIM, EL, ELOHIM GIBOR, ELOAH VA-DAATH, EL ADONAI TZABAOth, ELOHIM TZABAOth, SHADDAI (EL CHAI), all of them interpreted and connected as well with the power they had manifested when pronounced by the heroes and prophets of the Old Testament. This impressive invocation will, the exorcist is assured, force the spirits to come even if they are bound with chains of iron and with fire. When it has been uttered however, 'Solomon' confesses that hope may be deferred yet again; and he produces a more unnerving conjuration, in which the holy names used on even greater occasions than on the preceding one and in particular by Moses when calling down the plagues on Egypt are combined with fearful references to the Day of the Sovereign Judgement of God and to the Last Fire. This, repeated if necessary four times, to the east, south, west and north, may still prove unavailing; in which case, after making the Sign of the Tau upon the forehead of his companions, the Master is told to proceed to an even more sinister exorcism, in which various terrifying angelic names to be uttered by God on the Day of Doom and Destruction are hurled in the direction of the recalcitrant fiends, and fearful threats are uttered too. 'Then it is certain that they will come', says 'Solomon'; only to hedge immediately afterwards and propose a short address to the angels. Should this fail too, 'an Extremely Powerful Conjuration' must be sustained by the disobedient demons; a veritable volley reverberating through pages of grandiose Biblical reminiscences, mighty names, imperative commands, fair promises and direful threats. The spirits are now forced to appear:

These things being thus done and performed, ye shall see the Spirits come from all sides in great haste with their Princes and Superiors; the

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 19.

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Spirits of the First Order, like Soldiers, armed with spears, shields, and corslets; those of the Second Order like Barons, Princes, Dukes, Captains, and Generals of Armies. For the Third and last Order their King will appear, before whom go many players on instruments of music, accompanied by beautiful and melodious voices which sing in chorus.

Then the Exorcist, or Master of the Art, at the arrival of the King, whom he shall see crowned with a Diadem, should uncover the Holy Pentacles and Medals which he weareth upon his breast covered with a cloth of silk or of fine twined linen, and show them unto him, saying:—

Behold the Signs and Holy Names by and before whose power every knee should bow, of all that is in Heaven, upon Earth, or in Hell. Humble ye yourselves, therefore, under the Mighty hand of God.

Then will the King bow the knee before thee, and will say, 'What dost thou wish, and wherefore hast thou caused us to come hither from the Infernal Abodes?'

Then shall the Exorcist, or Master of Magical Art, with an assured air and a grave and imperious voice, order and command him to be tranquil, to keep the rest of his attendants peaceable and to impose silence upon them.

Let him, also, renew his fumigations, and offer large quantities of Incense, which he should at once place upon the fire, in order to appease the Spirits as he hath promised them. He should then cover the Pentacles, and he will see wonderful things, which it is impossible to relate, touching worldly matters and all sciences.

This being finished, let the Master uncover the Pentacles, and demand all that he shall wish from the King of the Spirits, and if there are one or two spirits only, it will be the same; and having obtained all his desire, he shall . . . license them to depart.<sup>1</sup>

But we are not out of the wood even yet; for after the dismissal has been given, the news is broken that there is still a possibility, remote but real, of non-compliance on the part of the spirits:

Take notice and observe carefully that this last conjuration is of so great importance and efficacy, that even if the Spirits were bound with chains of iron and fire, or shut up in some strong place, or retained by an oath, they could not even then delay to come. But supposing that they were being conjured in some other place or part of the Universe by some other Exorcist or Master of the Art, by the same conjuration; the

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 36. The use of incense was not only for purposes of appeasement and of punishment. It was also supposed to help the spirits to materialize. Its hallucinatory effect on the operator has often been pointed out.

Master should add to his conjuration that they should at least send him some Messengers, or some individual to declare unto him where they are, how employed, and the reason why they cannot come and obey him.

But if (which is almost impossible) they be even yet self-opinionated and disobedient, and unwilling to obey; in this case their names should be written on virgin paper, which he should soil and fill with mud, dust, or clay. Then he shall kindle a fire with dry rue, upon which he shall put powdered assafoetida, and other things of evil odour; after which let him put the aforesaid names, written on parchment or virgin paper, upon the fire...<sup>1</sup>

After a short conjuration of the fire, a curse is pronounced upon these insubordinate spirits invoking all the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which (Mathers reminds us in a footnote) have a special mystical meaning and power, by means of which

...we deprive ye of all office and dignity which ye may have enjoyed up till now; and by their virtue and power we relegate you unto a lake of sulphur and of flame, and unto the deepest depths of the Abyss, that ye may burn therein eternally for ever.<sup>2</sup>

This at long last will completely subdue the demons, who will now 'assuredly come' to be delivered from the agony caused by the symbolical burning. Their names must then be written afresh, perfumed and incensed, and they will do the exorcist's bidding. They must also be made to swear upon the Book of Conjurations that they will henceforward come whenever they are called. They may then be licensed to depart, and the interminable ceremony is over.

The constraint by ritual burning had already been advocated in the Greek papyri in which menaces also figured fairly frequently; nor can one read the hypotheses advanced to account for the non-appearance of the spirits without remembering Elijah's mocking words to the prophets of Baal

...either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.<sup>3</sup>

None of the spirits is named in Mathers' edition, though they are labelled Animals of Darkness at the conclusion of the rite, and said to be ashamed by day. The category of *Lucifugi* may therefore have been in the author's mind; it is at least quite certain through-

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> I Kings xviii, 27.

out that they are conceived of as evil and wicked, and although the blessing of God is called down upon them at the dismissal, this is with the qualification 'as far as ye are capable of receiving it'. Their manifestation in feudal and martial array is not unimpressive, but it throws little light on their offices and functions in the spiritual world. Nor will much that is relevant to the demons be gleaned from other portions of the manual:

There are different kinds of Spirits, according to the things over which they preside, some of them govern the Empyrean Heaven, others the Primum Mobile, others the First and Second Crystalline, others the Starry Heaven; there are also Spirits of the Heaven of Saturn, which I call Saturnites; there are Jovial, Martial, Solar, Venerean, Mercurial, and Lunar Spirits; there are also (Spirits) in the Elements as well as in the Heavens, there are some in the Fiery Region, others in the Air, others in the Water, and others upon the Earth, which can all render service to that man who shall have the good fortune to understand their nature, and to know how to attract them.<sup>1</sup>

This hardly sounds as if it were applicable to the Animals of Darkness invoked in the rite, but rather to a celestial hierarchy, gradually descending downwards to the elemental spirits, whose nature was generally supposed to be mixed, as 'Solomon' also seems to have believed:

The Earth being inhabited, as I have before said unto thee, by a great number of Celestial Beings and Spirits, who by their subtilty and prevision know the places wherein treasures are hidden, and seeing that it often happeneth that those men who undertake a search for these said treasures are molested and sometimes put to death by the aforesaid Spirits, which are called Gnomes; which, however, is not done through the Avarice of these said Gnomes, a Spirit being incapable of possessing anything, having no material senses wherewith to bring it into use, but because these Spirits, who are enemies of the passions, are equally so of Avarice, unto which men are so much inclined...<sup>2</sup>

Nor can anything really sinister or evil, anything in the nature of the wicked spirits, to whom the rite is addressed, be discovered in the following descriptions of elementals:

Some are created from Water.

Others from the Wind, unto which they are like.

Some from Earth.

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

Some from Clouds.

Others from Solar Vapours.

Others from the keenness and strength of Fire; and when they are invoked or summoned, they come always with great noise, and with the terrible nature of fire.

When the Spirits which are created of Water are invoked, they come with great rains, thunder, hail, lightning, thunder-bolts, and the like.

When the Spirits which are created of Clouds are invoked, they come with great deformity, in a horrible form, to strike fear into the Invocator, and with an exceeding great noise.

Others which are formed from the wind appear like thereunto and with exceeding swift motion, and whensoever those which are created from Beauty appear, they will show themselves in a fair and agreeable form; moreover, whensoever thou shalt call the Spirits created from Air, they will come with a kind of gentle breeze.

When the Spirits which are created from the Vapours of the Sun are invoked, they come under a very beautiful and excellent form, but filled with pride, vanity and conceit. They are clever... They show great ostentation and vainglory in their dress, and they rejoice in many ornaments; they boast of possessing mundane beauty, and all sorts of ornaments and decorations. Thou shalt only invoke them in serene, mild, and pleasant weather.<sup>1</sup>

These side-lights on the elemental spirits serve to emphasize the silence maintained about the cohorts of Infernus summoned in the rite. This is a symptom of the dualism often to be found in ritual texts, glaringly illuminated in the present one when it comes to the question of boons. These were left completely vague in the ceremony of conjuration itself to its undoubted advantage; for the high solemnity aimed at and sometimes achieved in the rite would most certainly have been sadly diminished if any mention had been made of the reasons for conducting it. These can be deduced from the so-called Secrets, heralded by a bombastic advertisement, called an Oration, which ends with a solemn warning to employ them aright, and never for any evil purpose; for ACCURSED IS HE WHO TAKETH THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY GOD IN VAIN, 'Solomon' booms out in capitals.

He then proceeds to reveal his puerile and silly secrets, ragtags and bobtails of folklore dressed up in Kabbalistic shreds and patches: How to discover a thief (by means of scissors and a sieve);

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, pp. 73f.

how to become invisible (by means of a waxen image); how to hinder a sportsman from killing any game; how to make magic garters (a kind of seven league boots); how to make a magic carpet; there is nothing of the sublime nor even of the sinister about these secrets. The last-named, however, is at least a feature of Solomonic legend; and being advertized as 'proper for interrogating the Intelligences' raises one's hopes. But it soon becomes apparent that the information most likely to be sought is the whereabouts of hidden treasure; and the subsequent experiment, how to render the exorcist master of a treasure possessed by spirits, goes straight to the point at issue. The seeking of favour and love by coercive magical methods and the operations of mockery, deceit and invisibility (done by deluding the senses) are on an even less exalted plane. Moreover some of the ingredients necessary for these experiments, if they show affiliations with folklore, also betray kinship with the black arts. The skin of a frog or a toad to be killed by the exorcist; the blood of a black hen; the blood of a black hare to be killed on June 25 before sunrise; the skin of a goat newly slain and the blood of a bat; the blood and fat of a man who has died in the month of July and strips off his winding-sheet; they are all redolent of witchcraft of the baser and more squalid sort. Certain of the pentacles too must be inscribed with animal blood; and at the end of the manual the sacrifice of white animals to good spirits and black animals to demons is acknowledged to be necessary in many operations.

It is much the same story with the protective pentacles which are also advertised as invaluable in constraining the planetary and luminary spirits to aid the magician in his various undertakings. Like the secrets, this section is introduced in the most solemn and pious manner. The operator is told that he must have ever in mind no other intention than the glory of God, the fulfilment of his desires, and loving-kindness towards his neighbour, and is finally anathematized should he use the key to the pentacles improperly:

ACCURSED BE HE WHO TAKETH THE NAME OF GOD IN VAIN!  
ACCURSED BE HE WHO USETH THIS KNOWLEDGE UNTO AN EVIL  
END, BE HE ACCURSED IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE WORLD TO  
COME. AMEN. BE HE ACCURSED IN THE NAME WHICH HE HATH  
BLASPHEMED!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 57.

Yet the advantages accruing from the pentacles redound not to the glory of God, but solely to that of the exorcist, to his fame, his power, his fortune and his success. Worse still, they often entail injury to others, and this cannot possibly be reconciled with loving-kindness towards one's neighbour. This is particularly the case with the pentacles connected with Saturn and Mars; as one would expect:

The Fourth Pentacle of Saturn.—This Pentacle serveth principally for executing all the experiments and operations of ruin, destruction, and death.... The Sixth Pentacle of Saturn.—Around this Pentacle is each Name symbolized as it should be. The person against whom thou shalt pronounce it shall be obsessed by Demons.... The Seventh and Last Pentacle of Saturn.—This Pentacle is fit for exciting earthquakes.... The Third Pentacle of Mars.—It is of great value for exciting war, wrath, discord, and hostility....<sup>1</sup>

The discrepancy between the lofty tone of the prayers and conjurations and the puerility of the 'secrets'; the inconsistency, to put it mildly, between the comminatory sermon on the misuse of the pentacles and the actual use recommended show a divided mind on the part of the author or compiler of the *Key of Solomon*. His intentions seem to have been of the best; but they were literally of the kind which pave the way to hell. As far as the pentacles are concerned, he was perhaps a victim of tradition, firmly fixed long before his day about the nature of the influences radiating from planets and luminaries. But the self-interest skulking in the very heart of magic, violently suppressed throughout the course of the rite of conjuration, shows itself in all its pettiness, ruthlessness and abject lust for power in the ignominious 'secrets' and the pentacular boons. Perhaps in no other magical manual is the tragic dualism between the aspirations and achievements of magic, between its religious convictions and its secular temptations more vividly illuminated than here. Mathers honestly believed that it was a book of white magic contaminated by black processes taken from other sources; Waite labelled it 'composite'; because, like nearly all printed rituals of any note, it contains experiments of both kinds. But the dualism goes deeper than that, penetrating the invocations of demons with heartfelt and genuine prayers. Magicians seem to

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, pp. 59 ff.

be doomed to halt for ever between two opinions, and in the present text both a Black Book and a White Book form part of the essential equipment of the exorcist:

Thou shouldest further make a Book of virgin paper, and therein write the foregoing conjurations, and constrain the Demons to swear upon the same book that they will come whenever they be called, and present themselves before thee, whenever thou shalt wish to consult them. Afterwards thou canst cover this Book with sacred Sigils on a plate of silver, and therein write or engrave the Holy Pentacles. Thou mayest open this Book either on Sundays or on Thursdays, rather at night than by day, and the Spirits will come.

Regarding the expression 'night', understand the night following, and not the night preceding the aforesaid days. And remember that by day (The Demons) are ashamed, for they are Animals of Darkness.<sup>1</sup>

This Book, containing the rite of conjuration, is technically black; since, despite the devoutly religious tone prevailing throughout, it is used to summon, coerce and subdue the evil spirits. The White Book on the other hand is addressed to the angels:

Make a small Book containing the Prayers for all the Operations, the Names of the Angels in the form of Litanies, their Seals and Characters; the which being done thou shalt consecrate the same unto God and unto the pure Spirits in the manner following:—

Thou shalt set in the destined place a small table covered with a white cloth, whereon thou shalt lay the Book opened at the Great Pentacle which should be drawn on the first leaf of the said Book; and having kindled a lamp which should be suspended above the centre of the table, thou shalt surround the said table with a white curtain; clothe thyself in the proper vestments, and holding the Book open, repeat upon thy knees the following prayer with great humility:—

ADONAI, ELOHIM, EL, EHEIHEH ASHER, EHEIEH, Prince of Princes, Existence of Existences, have mercy upon me, and cast Thine eyes upon Thy Servant (N.), who invokes Thee most devoutly, and supplicates Thee by Thy Holy and tremendous Name Tetragrammaton to be propitious, and to order Thine Angels and Spirits to come and take up their abode in this place; O all ye Angels and Spirits of the Stars, O all ye Angels and Elementary Spirits, O all ye Spirits present before the Face of God, I the Minister and faithful Servant of the Most High conjure ye, let God Himself, the Existence of Existences, conjure ye to come and be present at this Operation, I, the Servant of God, most humbly entreat ye. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, p. 38.



After which thou shalt incense it with the incense proper to the Planet and the day, and thou shalt replace the Book on the aforesaid Table, taking heed that the fire of the lamp be kept up continually during the operation, and keeping the curtains closed. Repeat the same ceremony for seven days, beginning with Saturday, and perfuming the Book... which thou shalt shut up... in a small drawer under the table, made expressly for it, until thou shalt have occasion to use it; and every time that thou wishest to use it, clothe thyself with thy vestments, kindle the lamp, and repeat upon thy knees the aforesaid prayer, 'Adonai, Elohim', etc.

It is necessary also, in the Conjunction of the Book, to summon all the Angels whose Names are written therein in the form of Litanies, the which thou shalt do with devotion; and even if the Angels and Spirits appear not in the Consecration of the Book, be not thou astonished thereat, seeing that they are of a pure nature, and consequently have much difficulty in familiarizing themselves with men who are inconstant and impure, but the Ceremonies and Characters being correctly carried out devoutly and with perseverance, they will be constrained to come, and it will at length happen that at thy first invocation thou wilt be able to see and communicate with them. But I advise thee to undertake nothing unclean or impure, for then thy importunity, far from attracting them, will only serve to chase them from thee; and it will be thereafter exceedingly difficult for thee to attract them for use for pure ends.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing could better illustrate the dualism in magical texts, the inextricable confusion between good and evil, than the fact that the prayer to be said in summoning the angels for pure converse is the same as the one used in the operation for making oneself master of a treasure possessed by the Spirits, for which the following ingredients amongst others are necessary: the fat and blood of a man who has died in the month of July and the cloth of his winding-sheet. This juxtaposition also furnishes a clue to the puzzling fact that magicians of a religious temperament who believed that they could summon angels should also have wished to invoke demons. From the days of the Chaldeans downwards, it was the darker powers who were believed to be the custodians of underground wealth, a belief which in the New Testament was developed in the temptation-scene, where Satan appears as the lord of the power, the glory and the riches of this world.

<sup>1</sup> *The Key of Solomon*, pp. 106f. Saturday, the Sabbath of the Jews, would be the appropriate day for beginning this pious operation.

The White Book explicitly mentions the necessity for writing the names, seals and characters of the angels to be invoked. The Black Book does not do the same for the demons; and indeed, although a mine of information on every other subject, the *Key of Solomon* is strangely reticent as we have seen about the hosts of hell. The so-called *Lemegeton* or *Lesser Key of Solomon*, which Mathers naïvely acknowledges to be 'extremely valuable in its own department', supplies what must have been a much-felt want of exorcists. This manual is also 'composite' in character, since it deals with all the spirits in the world, good, bad and indifferent; but only the first Goetic portion has been published; part of it by Wierus in Latin under the title *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* in 1563. Scot printed an English translation of this version in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* in 1584; and Waite reproduced, although in a slightly condensed form, the whole of the first part, taking it, as far as I can make out, from Sloane 2731 in the British Museum, 'a very neat MS., begun on January 10, 1676, and containing the entire "*Lemegeton, or Lesser Key of Solomon,*" in English'.<sup>1</sup> By a fortunate chance, I have become possessed of a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century English manuscript copy which seems to be almost identical with the one used by Waite, and from which I quote below. The title, *Lemegeton*, over which Mathers and Waite waste no words, seems to me a very puzzling one. It is never mentioned as far as my knowledge goes in those many and various compilations of magical books made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; but it seems to have been known under such names as *Liber Spirituum* and *Liber Officiorum*. What it signifies I do not know. It would appear to be a synonym for 'Lesser Key' or as my manuscript has it 'Little Key'; but in what language? It is not Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Latin. It claims to have been first written in the Chaldean and Hebrew tongues; but this I fear must be discounted.

Whatever its age and origin, it is of fundamental importance in the history of magical rituals; for it seems to have stood god-father to all the hierarchies of the Solomonian school and to others also. There are seventy-two chief devils listed in the *Lemegeton*; whereas Wierus gave only sixty-nine and Scot sixty-eight. In spite of a great

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Waite, *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts*, London, 1898, p. 20.

similarity in the names and functions, there are also many variations between Wierus and Scot on the one hand and the *Lemegeton* on the other, so that two variant sources must be postulated. Wierus and Scot give one general conjuration at the end of the list of spirits; but the *Lemegeton* communicates a complete ritual process à la 'Solomon', although a considerably shorter one; and the compiler gives a seal for each of the fiends of the hierarchy, whereas Wierus and Scot gave none.

The author accompanied his enumeration of the infernal spirits by the Talmudic legend according to which Solomon had imprisoned these fiends in a brazen vessel which he had then cast into a deep lake in Babylon. Believing that the vessel contained treasure, the Babylonians descended into the lake and broke the seal of the jar. The chief spirits with their attendant legions immediately flew out and dispersed to their former dwellings, except Belial who entered into a certain image whence he gave oracular responses to his worshippers. The Babylonians were therefore balked of their treasure; but it is an ill wind that blows no one any good. A fairly high percentage of the liberated fiends can procure treasures for the exorcist, and all of them confer great benefits. The number seventy-two was obviously inspired by the seventy-two divine names of the Schemhamphoras. The Kabbalists who invented these had three consonants to guide them in each case; but whoever was responsible for the list in *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* and the *Lemegeton* seems to have relied largely on his own imagination. The result, with a few not very brilliant exceptions, is unimpressive, uncouth and unlikely. GUSION, GOAP, CIMEJES, SABNOCK, CROCELL, IPOS, SITRI, RAUM, BUER, OROBAS; even ANDREALPHUS, GLASYA LA BOLAS, AMDUSCIAS, DANTALION, DECARABIA; there is something distinctly bogus about them all. They seem utterly devoid of mystery or menace; nor can one imagine that they would play that part in the ritual which Alesteir Crowley assigns to 'the barbarous names of evocation':

...the long strings of formidable words which roar and moan through so many conjurations have a real effect in exalting the consciousness of the magician to the proper pitch.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Paris, 1929, p. 69.

The forme of the Brazen Vessel  
That King Solomon shut up  
the spirits In &c

The secret Seale of Solomon  
by which he bound and sealed up  
the aforesaid spirits with their Legons  
in the Brazen Vessel



This Seale is to be made by one that is free  
to the inward and outward, and hath not defiled his  
Selfe by any woman, in the space of a Month, but has  
with fasting and prayer desired of God to forgive him  
all his sins ~

It is to be made in the day of O or K, twilight at 12

a Clock, and written with the blood of a

a Cock, which never had been; on a

Parchment; After on these Nights the

Increasing in use, and when it is so made, fume it with allium, Rasens of the fume Dates  
Potes and Lignum Aloes, by this Seale Solomon, conspired the aforesaid spirits in to the  
Brazen Vessel, and sealed it up with the same Seale, he by it gained the love of all Mankind  
of Angels; and overcome in battel, for neither weapon, fire nor water could hurt him; &c. This  
Seal was made to Close the Vessel at top &c

The other Materials is a Sceptor or sword, Mirror or Cap; a long white Robe of Lining, shoes  
and other clothes for the juggler, also a Girdle of a Lyon skin three fingers broad; with all the  
Names about it as is round the outermost part of the Circle, &c. also perfumes and a Chafin  
of Rosehold, and kindled to put the fumes into to fume or perfume the place appointed for  
action; also anointing Oiler to Anoint your fingers and Eyes with; and face water to  
wash your face in; and in so doing you are to say as David said (Vn) thou shalt perfume  
with Spices O Lord, and I shall be cleau, thou shalt wash me and I shall be white like  
Snow &c



## THE SOLOMONIC CYCLE

There are, however, six traditional names among this motley collection, ASMODEUS, ASTAROTH, BAAL, BELIAL, BERITH and PHOENIX, whose owners might be expected to carry some weight.<sup>1</sup> Asmodeus, familiar from the *Book of Tobit*, is a spirit of lust, a goddess born of the fallen angel Shamdon and of Namaah, the beautiful sister of Tubal-Cain. This spirit is thus characterized in my text:

The 32th spirit is ASMODY; he is a great King, Strong and Powerful, he appeareth with three heads, where of the first is like a Bull, the second like a Man, the third like a Ram, with a Serpents taile belching, or Vomiting up flames of fire out of his mouth; his foot is webbed, like a Goose, he sitteth on an Infernall Dragon, carring a Lance, & a flagge, in his hand...he giveth the Ring of Vertues, he teacheth the art of Arithmetick Geometry Astronomy and all handicrafts absolutly, he giveth full and true answers to your Demands, he maketh a man Invisible he showeth the place wheare treasure lies & gardeth it....

So much for Asmodeus. Astaroth, goddess of fertility and love, the Ishtar of the Babylonians, was present in Milton's pandemonium:

...*Astoreth*, whom the *Phoenicians* call'd  
*Astarte*, Queen of Heaven, with crescent Horns;  
To whose bright Image nightly by the Moon  
*Sidonian* Virgins paid their Vows and Songs;  
In *Sion* also not unsung, where stood  
Her Temple on th' offensive Mountain, built  
By that uxorious King whose heart though large,  
Beguil'd by fair Idolatresses, fell  
To Idols foul.<sup>2</sup>

But the *Lemegeton* knew nothing about all this:

The 29th spirit is ASTAROTH; he is a mighty & Strong Duke & appeareth in forme of an unbuitifull Angell, Rideing on an Infernall like a Dragon, & carring in his right hand a Viper, you must not let him come to near you, lest he do you Damage by his stinking breth therefore the Magician must hold the Magicall Ring neare his face and that will defend him; he giveth true answers of things past present and to come, and can Discover all secrets, he will Declare willingly how the Spirits fell if Desired, and the Reason of his own fall, he can make men wonderfull Knowing in all the Liberal Sciences....

<sup>1</sup> There is also a spirit called BALAM.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

The male counterpart of Astaroth, Baal, the great sun-god of the Canaanites, towering above all the other heathen gods in the Old Testament, headed the list in the *Lemegeton*, but was not given much space:

The first principal Spirit is a King ruling in the East, called BAEI he maketh man go invisible, he ruleth over 66 Legions of Inferiour Spirits, he appeareth in Divers Shapes, Sometimes like a Cat, Sometimes like a Toad and sometimes like a Man and sometimes all these formes at once; he speaks hostly [? hoarsely]....

Belial, the Jewish apocalyptic name for the chief power of evil, fared rather better than Baal:

The 68th spirit is Belial, he is a Mighty King; and powerfull he was created next after Lucifer, and is of his order, he appeareth in the forme of two butifull angels siting in a Chariot of fire, speaking with a Comely Voice, Declaring that he fell first, from amongst the worser sort, which went before Michael, and Other heavenly Angels, his office is to Distrubit preferments of senatory-ship, and to Cause faviouir of friends and foes, he giveth Excelent familiers, and governeth 80 Legions of spirits, not [? note] this King BELIAL, must have Offerings sacrifices and giffs, presented to him by the Exorcist, or else he will not give trew answers to his demands, but then he tarrieth not one hour in the truth, Except he be Constrained by Divine power....

The reference to Lucifer makes the inevitable contrast between the hosts of hell as presented by the *Lemegeton* and Milton still sharper. The childishness of the imagination, the lack of knowledge of evil in this and in other Black Books are indeed almost disarming when compared with the sophistication of the Puritan poet:

*Belial* came last: than whom a Spirit more lewd  
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love  
Vice for it self. To him no Temple stood  
Or Altar smoak'd; yet who more oft than hee  
In Temples and at Altars, when the Priest,  
Turns Atheist, as did *Ely's* Sons, who fill'd  
With lust and violence the house of God.  
In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns,  
And in luxurious Cities, where the noyse  
Of riot ascends above their loftiest *Towers*,  
And injury and outrage...<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

In dealing with Berith, referred to in Judges as the god of the infidels, the *Lemegeton* has at least this advantage that no invidious comparisons with Milton are to be feared:

The 28th spirit in order as SOLOMON; bound them, is Named BERITH; Mighty great and Terrible Duke, he hath two other Names of latter times (Viz) BEALE, and BOLFRY; he appeareth in forme of a souldier, with Read Clothing, Rideing on a Read horse and a crown of Gold upon his head, he giveth true answers past present and to come; . . . he can turne all Mettles in to Gold; he can give Dignities, & can Confirm them to man, he speaketh with a very Clear & subtil voyce he is a great lyer & not to be trusted unto. . . .

Phoenix, the immortal bird of Egypt, is the only one among the whole seventy-two who makes any appeal to one's sympathies; and he is the only one of the six bearing traditional names who at all resembles his namesake:

The 37th spirit is PHENIX, he is a great Marquest, and appeareth like the bird phenix, having a Childs vice, he singeth many sweet Notes before the Exorcist, which he must not regard, but by, & by, he must bid him put on a human shape, then he will speake marvelously of all wonderfull sciences if Desired, he is a good and Excellent poet, and will be willing to do your Request, he hath hopes to Returne to the seventh throne, after 1200 years, more as he said, to SOLOMON. . . .

One shares that hope, because of a certain charm of character displayed in this sketch. Several other fiends flatter themselves with the same expectation: but, according to Wierus, they are indulging in what is now called wishful thinking. Others again among the seventy-two are so malignant or so deceitful that they must be forced by means of a hazel wand into a triangle outside the magic circle, otherwise they will either refuse to obey the magician or else deceive him. The monstrous therioform shapes which almost all of them wear, at least upon their first appearance, point back to Babylon; and one can readily understand the stern commands to come in a fair human form without deformity or terror which the two *Clavicles*, and indeed most magical rituals, included in their conjurations. The seals or characters given beside their names are more fantastic than beautiful, having little on the whole of that decorative charm which is characteristic in the main of the lettering, figures, inscriptions and pentacles scattered so profusely throughout the literature of ceremonial magic.



Little though one is predisposed in favour of these ugly brutes with their preposterous names, candour compels one to acknowledge that the boons at their disposal were by no means all of them bad. Indeed it is disarming to find that the gift of knowledge ranked supreme. More than thirty of the spirits of the *Lemegeton* were teaching devils in the literal sense, furthering and promoting the so-called liberal sciences and arts: astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, geometry, mathematics, the science of measurement; philosophy, logic, rhetoric, ethics (!); geomancy, cheiromancy, pyromancy; these were the disciplines they represented. Others taught languages, the virtues of herbs and precious stones and woods and the virtues and mansions of the planets. Many others again revealed things past, present and to come, discoursed of hidden and secret things, of the creation of the world and of God, of the fall of the angels, and gave news of the souls of those who had died in sin. Of some it was confidently stated that they would answer all questions about secret matters human or divine; and one, rejoicing in the name of CAMIO and appearing in the form of a thrush, could impart to men the understanding of birds' songs, the lowing of cattle, the barking of dogs, and the voice of waters. If this last gift brings Siegfried as well as Solomon to mind, the acquisition of knowledge both temporal and spiritual harks back to Solomon again and then darts forward to Faust; whilst the continually reiterated fact that the spirits of the *Lemegeton* are the fallen and rebellious angels links this magical handbook closely with *Enoch*, where the angels who disobediently descended unto men taught them their own angelic wisdom and skill. In the *Little Key of Solomon* they carry on this tradition, endowing the exorcist as well with skill in mechanics, in all handicrafts and manual professions, and giving him wit, wisdom, cunning, a good understanding, eloquence, courage, the ring of virtues and a good reputation.

Except that all these benefits derive from a suspect source, it would be a moral pedant indeed who could quarrel with them. One feels rather less certain about the conferment of dignities and honours of all descriptions also to be obtained from the fiends; and one's heart sinks slightly whenever treasure is mentioned among the boons, which happens fairly frequently, and generally with the epithets 'concealed', 'secret', 'hidden', 'kept by the spirits'. Twice the treasure in question is to be stolen by the demon in

charge, Shax actually taking it from the king's exchequer, although he will return it after 1200 years if desired. The procuring of love is another very doubtful blessing, mentioned eleven times; but the reconciling of friends and foes is surely a virtuous act, and the favour of friends and foes seems perfectly innocuous. The gifts of invisibility and of lightning transport of men and things, such as bringing artificers swiftly from all parts of the world, are not in themselves harmful; and the same may be said of the power of transformation, although the changing of men into various shapes would generally be a questionable proceeding; the alteration of water into wine might be abused, but appears less devilish than the converse, also represented, of transforming wine into water; whilst the transmutation of all metals into gold or into coins of the realm clearly panders to the lust of avarice, and is in the same ambiguous category as the discovery of treasure. On the other hand the disclosure of all wickedness and underhand dealing and the discovery of witches could only rank as a benefit; and the visiting of the wicked with the sword, though perhaps to be deprecated, betrays no evil intentions. Indifferently good or bad are the gifts of procuring illusions, such as causing the sea to seem full of ships, making a great commotion like that of running water, causing musical instruments to be heard but not seen, showing the similitude of anyone required in a vision. Snake-charmers could only applaud the discovery of the whereabouts of serpents and the delivery of them in a helpless condition into the hands of the exorcist; but only nudist colonies would welcome the power of causing women to show themselves naked; and all of us would recoil from the gift of knowing all human hearts, changing them at will and subjecting men to the power of the magician. This is black magic indeed, and we have recently seen where it may lead.

The procuring of familiars, a benefit frequently mentioned, also savours strongly of the black Art; and the control of nature, although this could be used to promote fertility and increase, shows its darker side in the *Lemegeton*. It is true that the guiding of the waters and battle-ships, the warming of waters, but also the distempering of baths (the thermal springs visited by the sick), are included in the list of these powers; but earthquakes, storms, thunder, lightning and great winds predominate. Conquering kings would be glad of the power of marshalling armies, of making

men strong in battle, of sending them to the fields of battle, and of building and fortifying towers, camps and cities; but this leads inevitably to works of destruction, such as the occasioning of battles and wars, demolishing walls, sinking warships, destroying cities and dignities, temples and towers; burning towns, sowing discord, exciting hatred, leading men into homicide and also theft; inciting to bloodshed, killing the unwary, and finally destroying and burning the exorcist's enemies. Other works of evil have an even uglier sound. In marked contrast to the *Testament of Solomon*, the author of the *Little Key of Solomon* was hardly if at all interested in the curing of diseases, mentioned only twice. But he more than once advocated causing disease and sickness: making men insensible; destroying their sight, hearing and understanding; causing arrow-wounds to putrefy; tormenting men with wounds and putrid sores swarming with worms; occasioning death in three days by putrefying sores and worm-eaten wounds. This is thoroughly evil; and evil too are the practices mentioned of a necromantic nature: changing the places of the dead; causing demons to crowd round sepulchres; changing dead bodies and lighting phantom candles on their graves; constraining the souls of the dead to appear and answer questions.

Although by putting all the works of evil and destruction into one paragraph and placing them at the end a very 'black' impression is created, yet Waite goes much too far when he summarizes the gifts and powers bestowed by the spirits of the *Lemegeton* as 'two-and-seventy methods of accomplishing all abominations... Satanism undiluted, *plus* all the mysteries of the impure Venus'.<sup>1</sup> The Satanism consists in invoking evil spirits; and the fundamental magical error lies in the belief that they can be constrained and coerced to do good; that is to say the 'black' magician of this sort was aping God, who was held by the Fathers to permit the evil deeds of the devil for His own divine purposes. Granting that there is a core of blasphemy in this error, and that the best of gifts can be abused, one must still protest that philosophy, logic, rhetoric, ethics, geometry, the curing of diseases, the reconciling of foes, and the discovery of wickedness are not 'abominations'.

From the point of view of legend, a scrutiny of this list of gifts and powers yields interesting results, for it contains nearly all the

<sup>1</sup> Waite, *op. cit.* pp. 189f.

traditional feats and functions attributed to magicians from the days of Zoroaster downwards: power over the spirits, which the names and seals of this manual provide; the control of nature; power over the minds and bodies of men; the power to transform, to transport and to render invisible; divination, necromancy and the procuring of treasure. The mages (who were also sages) possessed supernatural knowledge and wisdom; and some of them were able to bring the dead back to life and to create life. These two gifts are not represented in the *Lemegeton*; but all the others are there.

Unimpressive as the hierarchy is, it is at least factual and highly informative. But the author did not stop there. Having introduced the exorcist to the company he was about to keep, and having further given vital instructions as to the times when members of the various categories (kings, dukes, presidents, marquises, etc.) should be summoned, he proceeded to describe the other preliminary operations: the tracing of the ceremonial circle, with its inscriptions and divine names; the triangle two feet outside this for the rebellious spirits; the double seal and pentagram of Solomon to be worn by the operator together with the seal of the spirit to be summoned which, when shown to him, will compel obedience and the assumption of the human form; lastly the secret seal of Solomon, drawn upon virgin parchment with the blood of a black cock that has never engendered. This should be done on a Tuesday or Saturday at midnight, with the moon increasing in Virgo, whilst burning perfumes of aloes, resin, cedar and alum.

The exorcist, having observed chastity and fasting for a month accompanied by prayers to God, is now ready to begin. Clad in a white robe, a mitre on his head and a girdle of lion's skin about his waist bearing the same names as those in the outer circumference of the circle, he utters a short lustration prayer and another at vesting. He then proceeds to the first conjuration. Invoking the holy names of God and his terrible power over the elements, he conjures the spirit N.

...that ye forthwith Appear, and show your selfe unto me, before this Circle in a faire and human shape without any Deformity or ugly shape, and without delay.... I Conjure you by him whome all Creatures are obedient; and by this Ineffable Name TETRAGRAMATON, JEHOVAH which being heard the Elements are overturned, the aire is shaken,

the sea runeth back; the fire is quenched the Earth trembleth, and all the host of CEELISTIAL, TERRESTALL and Infernall do Tremble, and are trubled and Confounded, together, that you Visably, and affibly speak unto me with a Clear Voice, Intelligible and without any Ambiguity; therefore Come ye in the Name ADONAIJ-ZABAOth, ADONIJ AMIOREM—Come Come why stay you hasten ADONAY SADAY the KING of KINGS Commands you.

This description of the power of the Name is closely akin to those given in the Greek papyri, and is by no means unimpressive. But though the conjuration containing it may be repeated as often as the exorcist thinks fit, the spirit may not heed it; in that case an invocation, very similar to its counterpart in the *Key of Solomon* and also to be found in the *Heptameron* of 'Abano' and other manuals, must be resorted to. It is of Kabbalistic origin, reproducing various names said to have been uttered by the heroes of the Old Testament and of the Apocrypha in moments of crisis and stress. It illustrates vividly the fact that the Solomonic rituals drew their inspiration from Biblical legend; and that the process, which is believed to have taken place in earlier times (ritual creating myth), is here reversed

...by the Name and in the Name Y and V which Adam heard, and spake, and by the Name JOTH which Jacob heard from the Angel wristling with him, and was Delivered from the hands of Esau; his brother, and by the Name of GOD, AGLA—which lot heard, and was saved withis his family; and by the Name ANEPHENTON—which Aron heard, and spake and became wise; and by the Name SCHEMES-AMATHIA which Joshua called upon, and the sunn stood still; and by the name EMANUEL which the 3 Children SHADRAH, MESHECH, ABEDNEGO sung in the Midst of the firy furnace, and was Delivered; and by the Name APHA and OMEGA which Daniel Named, and Destroyed bell, and the dragon; and by the name ZEBAOth which Moses Named, and all the Rivers and waters in Egypt were turned into blood...

After the plagues there is a reference to 'the uncertain sea of Glass' and to 'the four beasts before the throne'; but in spite of these tremendous names and powers the spirit may persist in tarrying. A third conjuration, called a Constraint, is therefore now to be spoken

...by those seven Names, which wise SOLOMON bound thee and thy fellows in a Vessel of brase ADONAIJ, PRERAI.—TETRAGRAM-MATON, PATHATUMON and ITEMON...and if you be so disobedient

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and Refuse to Come, I will...Curse you and deprive you from all your office, joye and place, and bind you in the debth of the bottomless pitt, there to Remain unto the day of the last Judgement, and I will bind you in the Eternal fire, and into the Lake of fire and brimston....

If after this parlous threat there is still no sign of the spirit, the overwhelming probability is that his king has sent him elsewhere, and the latter must be invoked to dispatch his servant to the magician. This invocation and the Constraint having been rehearsed several times without result, it begins to look as if the procrastinating spirit is bound with chains and *The Generall curse (Called the Spirits Chaines) again all Spirits that Rebell* will incontinently break the fetters. Whilst this Curse is being uttered, the seal of the spirit written on parchment must be put into a black box with assafoetida and other stinking substances, fastened with wire and held by the point of the exorcist's sword over a charcoal fire. The Curse takes the form of threatened excommunication, of the destruction of the seal and name of the spirit by fire and their burial in eternal oblivion unless he appear immediately in the shape and fashion desired. Should there be any delay after the threat has been made, it must be implemented by lowering the box into the flames whilst variants of the former menaces should be uttered, concluding as follows:

...and as thy name and seale is Contained in this box Chaned and bound up; and shall be Choked, in sulphurous and stinking substance, and burnt in this Materiall fire, so in the name JEHOVAH and by the power, and Dignity of those three Names TETRAGRAMMATON, ANEPHENETON and PRIMEUMATON Cast into the other disobedient spirit: N: into the lake of fire, which is prepared for the Damned, and Cursed spirits, and there to Remain to the Day of Doome, and never more to be Remembered of, before the face of, which shall Come to Judge the Quick and the dead and the world by fire.

Or, according to Waite, whose manuscript is more intelligible here

...may all these drive thee, O thou disobedient Spirit N. into the Lake of Fire, prepared for the damned and accursed Spirits, there to remain until the Day of Doom, remembered no more before the face of that God who shall come to judge the quick and the dead, with the whole world, by fire.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. pp. 200f.

N. (and who can blame him?) now makes all haste to appear. He is to be courteously received, the fire must be quenched, sweet perfumes burned, and the pentacle of Solomon exhibited to the spirit. Banned into the triangle, he will listen to the magician's demands or questions and fulfil or answer them. When this is satisfactorily accomplished, he should be licensed to depart peaceably 'without doing any injury, or danger to man or beast'; and the exorcist, who styles himself Octinimos, must give thanks to God for his great blessing in granting the magician's desires and in delivering him from the malice of the enemy. The spirit now having departed, the sorcerer may leave the circle.

This is the end of the first part of the *Lemegeton* which also introduces the kings of the four quarters of the globe as in supreme command of the infernal cohorts. But the writer only mentioned three: AMAYMON, CORSON and GOAP, kings of the east, west and south respectively. Waite supplies the name of the king of the north, ZIMNAR. These potentates who figure in the *Testament of Solomon*

...are not to be Called forth Except it be upon great Occasion, but Invoked: and Commanded to send such, or such a spirit, as is under their power and Rule...

Apart from the text itself, the manuscript has several interesting features. There is a pen and ink portrait of Solomon on the title-page; and although the seals of the seventy-two devils lack the artistry which one has learnt to expect in ritual texts (in this respect corresponding to the inartistic names), the diagrams in black and gold of Solomon's circle, triangle, hexagon, pentagon and seal are pleasing, as indeed is also the beautifully legible handwriting in Indian ink with well-formed large cursive letters for the spirits' names. There is also a pen and ink drawing of the famous brazen vessel, and a diagram of the secret seal with which it was hermetically closed.

All this, however, only comprises twelve of the sixty-two folio leaves of the manuscript, whose various parts are thus described on the title-page:

The first part is a book of evil Spirits, Called GOETIA; Shewing how he bound up those Spirits, and used them in Severall things where by he Obtained great fame.

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The Second part is a book of Spirits partly Good, and partly Evil; which is Named *THEURGIA-GOETIA*; all Ayriall Spirits &c;

The third part is of Spirits Governing the planetary houers, and what Spirits belongs to every Degree of the Signs, and Planits in the Signs; called the *PAULIN, ART* &c.

The fourth part of this Book is called *ALMADE*[L], of Solomon, which contains 20 chief Spirits, which governs the foure Altitudes, or the 360 Degrees of the Zodiack.

These two last orders of Spirits is of good and is called *THEURGIA*, and is to be Sought after by Divine Seeking &c.

Even in *Theurgia-Goetia* the good spirits seem to be in an overwhelming majority, which may perhaps reconcile the virtuous to the astronomical numbers which confront one in the last three parts of the *Lemegeton*. There are literally milliards of angels involved, although fortunately not all of them are named; nevertheless the lists given are formidable enough; and one can only marvel again at the superhuman patience which magic induces in its votaries. The lay mind reels as it contemplates the never-ending series of annotated names; the seals begin to dance before one's eyes and billions of spirits seem to be pressing round one, as indeed the author meant that they should:

*DEMORIEL* is the great and Mighty Emprour of the North, who hath 400 great, and 600 Lesser Dukes with 700000.800000.900000 Servants under his Command to attend him....

Note, when you Call *CARNESIEL*, Either by day or by Night there attends him 60.000.000.000.000 Dukes but when you Call any of these dukes, there never attends above 300, and some times not above 10, &c.

It would seem better all things considered to call up one of the dukes, of which the author generally only names twenty-four, twelve to be summoned in the day-time and twelve by night. His highly developed although very confused angelology seems not unlike an attempt to tabulate and describe the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands in Revelation: to reduce an apocalyptic vision to entities which would admit of magical manipulation. It is therefore a work of vast pretensions; but too daunting, one would imagine, to exercise much influence, which may account for the fact that this part of the manual has never been published. The angels' names, for the most part ending in -el or



-iel, are perhaps slightly less outlandish than those in the *Goetia*; but one hardly has the mental energy to cope with them. Nevertheless, besides the archangels GABRIEL, MICHAEL, RAPHAEL and URIEL, there are some traditional ones with a history behind them or a history to come which should perhaps be signalized:

ANAEI. Ananêl in *Enoch*. Anael in the *Key of Solomon*, *Schemhamphoras* and 'Faust's' *Magia*: the spirit of Venus. In 'Abano's' *Heptameron*: the spirit of Friday.

ANIEL. Haniel in the *Sword of Moses*, *Schemhamphoras* and 'Faust's' *Magia*.

ARIEL. In Old Testament: Arel in *Sword of Moses*; Arael in *Testament of Solomon*; Ariel in *Key of Solomon*, *Schemhamphoras*, 'Faust's' *Magia*, *The Tempest* and elsewhere.

ARSIEL. Aziel in Papyri; Azliel in *Sword of Moses*; Asiel in *Testament of Solomon*; Aciel in *Schemhamphoras* and 'Faust's' *Magia*; Aziel elsewhere in Faustian manuals.

ASAIEL. Azael in Papyri; Asrael in *Sword of Moses*; Azael in *Testament of Solomon*, *Schemhamphoras*, 'Faust's' *Magia* and *Paradise Lost*.

CAMIEL. Camael in *Schemhamphoras*; Camniel in 'Faust's' *Magia*.

CASIEL. Cassiel in *Heptameron* and elsewhere, spirit of Saturday.

CASPIEL. Casphiel in 'Faust's' *Magia*.

DANIEL. Danêl in *Enoch*.

SACHIEL. Spirit of Thursday in *Heptameron* and elsewhere.

SAMAEL. Arch-fiend in Rabbinical literature: Samiêl in *Enoch*; Samael in *Testament of Solomon*, *Schemhamphoras* and 'Faust's' *Magia*; spirit of Tuesday in *Heptameron* and elsewhere.

SARAIEL. Sarêl, Sariêl in *Enoch*.

SERAPHIEL. In *Schemhamphoras*.

USIEL. Spirit invoked in a so-called Jesuit magical manual.<sup>1</sup>

These fourteen names are like so many grains in a bucket of sand in proportion to the numbers from which they have been taken; nor would I like to affirm that I have not missed some correspondences. For it is hardly possible to attend closely to the angelic host as presented by the *Lemegeton*, a characteristic which this portion of the manual shares with some great works of poetry. It has, however, at least become clear that this is a composite ritual in which the white elements far outweigh the black, if space is any

<sup>1</sup> *Schemhamphoras* in italics stands for the magical manual of that name.

criterion; but if interest and influence are the test, then the position is reversed.

The two *Clavicles* attributed to Solomon are permeated with the religion of Judaism and the esotericism of the Kabbala. The demonology of the *Lemegeton* probably derived from the *Testament of Solomon* as far as the list of offices and functions goes; the notion of the fallen angels as the magical masters of mankind would seem to come from *Enoch*; but the origin of the devils' names is for the most part obscure. The constraint by ritual burning, advocated in both manuals, had been a feature of the Greek papyri. The legend of Solomon furnished matter for the introduction to the *Key* and for the account of the brazen vessel in the *Lemegeton*. The magic carpet was not forgotten, and Solomon's mastery of the spirits was constantly referred to; but the *Testament of Solomon* is much more clearly the child of legend than either of the *Clavicles*. They, on the other hand, have developed the dramatic possibilities in the situation between Solomon and the fiends to a far greater extent. The mystery enacted by both is much tenser than anything to be found in the Greek papyri, and yet the poetical value is almost non-existent; for although both the *Clavicles* aim at sublimity in the conjurations, they rarely attain to real dignity and often overbalance into pomposity. The impressiveness of the language, when it is impressive, is generally due to direct borrowings from the Old Testament. But, especially in the *Key*, the action is dramatic, rising through a series of invocations, adjurations, menaces and curses with increasing intensity to the final symbolical burning. It is fraught with suspense until at last the climax is reached with the manifestation of the spirits. Even a modern reader, although wearied by the length of the invocations, may find himself affected by the spiritual drama represented, by the courage and endurance of the operator and the difficulties and dangers he must face. It is therefore true to say that the *Lemegeton* is less dramatic because it is shorter. An action of this nature must have magnitude.

Where both manuals fail, and the *Lemegeton* far more conspicuously than the *Key* because it attempts much more, is in their descriptions of the hosts of hell. In those dark spiritual regions they were completely out of their depth and totally devoid of the kind of imagination shown in the Greek papyri, let alone apocalyptic

vision. It is not from either of these ritual texts that one could cherish hopes of anything in the nature of a second *Divine Comedy* or another *Paradise Lost* emerging from ceremonial magic. On the other hand, a faint expectation of drama might be entertained.

(b) *The Grimoires*

The Solomonic *Clavicles*, whatever their aesthetic and spiritual shortcomings, were prolific in the extreme, and brought forth a numerous progeny, especially in the Latin countries. The French *grimoires*, often deriving from Italy, are much more firmly based on the *Key of Solomon* and the *Lemegeton* than the English and German variants. French formalism and respect for classical models and tradition may be accountable for the conscientiousness with which the authors of three of the best known French magical texts cling to the *Clavicles*, as indeed their titles indicate:

GRIMORIUM VERUM, or the Most Approved Keys of Solomon the Hebrew Rabbin, wherein the Most Hidden Secrets, both Natural and Supernatural, are immediately exhibited, but it is necessary that the Demons should be contented on their part. Translated from the Hebrew by Plaignière, a Dominican Jesuit, with a Collection of Curious Secrets. Published by Alibeck the Egyptian, 1517. (On the reverse of the title) THE TRUE CLAVICLES OF SOLOMON, Memphis. Published by Alibeck the Egyptian.

TRUE BLACK MAGIC, or the Secret of Secrets, an MS. found at Jerusalem in the Sepulchre of Solomon, containing: 1. Forty-five Talismans with their representation, as also the manner of using them, together with their Marvellous Properties. 2. All Magical Characters known unto this day. Translated from the Hebrew of the Magus Iroegregio. Rome. In the year of grace, 1750.

THE GRAND GRIMOIRE, with the Powerful Clavicle of Solomon and of Black Magic; or the Infernal Devices of the Great Agrippa for the Discovery of all Hidden Treasures and the Subjugation of every Denomination of Spirits, together with an Abridgment of all the Magical Arts. (In its earliest edition, without place or date.)<sup>1</sup>

*True Black Magic*, the least interesting of the three, merely reproduces with some slight variations the preambles and the initial rites of the *Key*; it has no infernal hierarchy, and stops short of the

<sup>1</sup> Waite, *The Book of Black Magic*, pp. 70f. A Dominican Jesuit is of course an absurdity.

conjurations. The *Grimorium Verum* follows the same authority very closely as regards the preparation of the person and instruments of the operator; it differs considerably in the instructions for the manufacture of the virgin parchment; and the processes of evocation and dismissal are entirely different, consisting of short formulae made up of barbarous names addressed to Lucifer, Beelzebuth and Astaroth, with a fourth conjuration for inferior spirits. The hierarchy of this manual consists of the three superior demons just named, of their six chief officers, of seventeen subordinate spirits and of four minor ones, thirty in all. None of the names, except Astaroth, corresponds to any of the seventy-two in the *Lemegeton*; but there is a strong family resemblance between such appellations as FORNEUS, VAPULA, ZAGAN, BARBATOS in the *Little Key* and BECHARD, FRIMOST, GULAND, SURGAT in the *Grimorium Verum*. The *Grand Grimoire* has the same chief devils as the *Grimorium Verum* and all but one of the six subordinates tally as to names although not as to functions. The so-called Prime Minister, however, called LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE,<sup>1</sup> is peculiar to the *Grand Grimoire*, whilst the eighteen inferior devils, given with their seals and offices, are identical with those in the *Lemegeton*. The *Key of Solomon* obviously stood godfather to the opening rites in this text, as indeed to the whole batch of three, whose compilers were clearly great sticklers for the etiquette of ritual and determined to have everything just so; determined too, as their titles show, to claim the authorship of Solomon. The self-styled editor of the *Grand Grimoire*, Antonio Venitiana del Rabina, was very insistent on this, declaring that he had transcribed his text from the genuine writings of the Wise King, obtained by a happy chance:

Of a truth, what other man, save this invincible genius, would have had the hardihood to reveal the withering words which God makes use of to strike terror into the rebellious angels and compel them into obedience? Having soared into the celestial altitudes that he might master the secrets and learn the omnipotent words which constitute all the power of a terrible and venerable Deity, the essence of those innermost arcana, made use of by an infinite Divinity, was extracted by this grand king, who passed all the days of his life in the most laborious researches,

<sup>1</sup> Rofocale appears to be an anagram for Focalor, one of the devils in the *Lemegeton*.

and in pursuit of the most obscure and hopeless secrets. He succeeded ultimately in all his undertakings, penetrating into the most remote haunts of spirits, whom he bound, one and all, and forced them to obey him by the power of his Talisman or Clavicle. Therein he has discovered unto us the stellar influences, the constellation of the planets, and the method for the evocation of all hierarchies of spirits, by the recitation of the sublime Appellations, as they are hereafter set down for you in this book, as well as the true composition and effects of the dreadful Blasting Rod, which causes the spirits to tremble; which God also used to arm his Angel when Adam and Eve were driven out of the Earthly Paradise; wherewith, finally, he smote the rebellious Angels, precipitating their ambitions into the most appalling gulfs by the power of this very Rod—of this Rod which collects the clouds, disperses tempests, averts the lightning, or precipitates each and all upon any portion of the earth at the pleasure of its director.<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly to be wondered at that the author who was about to impart to his disciples the secret of the manufacture of the blasting rod should have concentrated upon this and left most of the other instruments to look after themselves. He devotes a whole chapter to it; and also goes into great detail on the subject of the sacrifice of the virgin kid from strips of whose skin the ceremonial circle must be composed and held in position by four nails taken from the coffin of a dead child. The Karcist, as the operator is styled in this text, must also from the very beginning of the magical proceedings carry continually upon his person a bloodstone called *ématille*, purchased from a druggist.<sup>2</sup> This stone will protect him against the spirit to be invoked, who will throughout attempt to terrify the magician in order to escape from the snares which the latter is preparing for him. This opening warning, stressing the dangers to be faced, is not unlike a prologue to the drama about to be enacted in the ritual.

It opens with stately prayers and a first solemn conjuration addressed to Lucifer. This is followed by a considerably more menacing invocation in which the Karcist proclaims that he will smite Lucifer and all his race with the terrible blasting rod into the

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. pp. 74f. A hazel-stick is advocated in the *Lemegeton*, in order to force the terrible spirit Beleth to enter the triangle.

<sup>2</sup> Like all precious and semi-precious stones, the bloodstone was believed to possess magical properties; according to the Leyden papyrus anyone having it with him would be given whatever he asked for.

depths of the bottomless abyss, unless he appears without noise and without any evil smell to respond in a clear and intelligible voice to all the questions put to him. The Karcist is then enjoined:

Before uttering the third Conjunction, should the spirit refuse to comply, read what follows in the *Clavicle*, and smite all the spirits by plunging the forked extremities of your rod into the flames, and be not alarmed in so doing at the frightful howls which you may hear, for at this extreme moment all the spirits will manifest. Then, before reading the *Clavicle*, and in the midst of the commotion, recite the third Conjunction.<sup>1</sup>

Should the spirit still fail to appear, the two ends of the rod must be plunged again into the flames and the words of the Grand Conjunction, said to be extracted from the veritable *Clavicle*, must be uttered. This consists of various names and of a good many letters of the alphabet. After a second repetition of these 'sublime and powerful words' Lucifuge Rofocale, Prime Minister to the Emperor Lucifer, will appear. To put the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt, a conventionalized drawing of a rather feeble-looking devil with three horns, a tail and cloven hoofs is given in the text. A dialogue between Lucifuge and the magician now takes place, in which the spirit pleads for the cessation of the torments inflicted, only to be threatened with worse ones if he refuses the Karcist's requests. These are thereupon enumerated, and Lucifuge makes the following answer:

I cannot comply with thy request on such terms, nor on any others, unless thou shalt give thyself over to me in fifty years, to do with thy body and soul as I please.<sup>2</sup>

He is cowed by further 'smitings' with the blasting rod and a third repetition of the Grand Conjunction, and submits, promising to be at the operator's disposal on two several occasions every night of the week, Sundays excepted. He makes a show of independence by slightly altering all the times proposed, and continues thus:

I also approve thy Book, and I give thee my true signature on parchment, which thou shalt affix at its end, to make use of at thy need. Further, I place myself at thy disposition, to appear before thee at thy

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. pp. 214f. A charcoal brazier is one of the requisites for this rite and for many others.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 217.

## RITUAL MAGIC

call when, being purified, and holding the dreadful Blasting Rod, thou shalt open the Book, having described the Kabbalistic circle and pronounced the word Rofocale. I promise thee to have friendly commerce with those who are fortified by the possession of the said Book, where my true signature stands, provided that they invoke me according to rule, on the first occasion that they require me. I also engage to deliver thee the treasure which thou seekest, on condition that thou keepest the secret for ever inviolable, art charitable to the poor, and dost give me a gold or silver coin on the first day of every month. If thou failest, thou art mine everlastingly.

LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE <sup>1</sup>

### IMPRIMATUR

This is a very interesting document; and, as the title of the *Grand Grimoire* suggests, it was probably based on a description of how to make and how to use the *Liber Spirituum* given by Pseudo-Agrippa in the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*.<sup>2</sup> So that a third influence is discernible in this text. The second point of importance is the nature of the agreement signed by Lucifuge, a compromise between the unilateral pact in which the spirits bind themselves to serve the magician without any conditions, and the bilateral pact in which the latter forfeits his soul. This is a conditional agreement, certainly as far as the treasure is concerned, for which, as we shall see in a moment, this rite is being conducted. Lucifuge must receive a remuneration; and unless the Karcist keeps the secret and is charitable to the poor he will face eternal damnation. These stipulations, however, are slight and simple; the burden of service and obedience falls upon the fiend.

The Karcist in the text accepts the terms offered, and may now issue from the protective circle, leaving his two assistants (if he has them) behind. They must remain mute and motionless throughout the whole proceedings, whatever they may see or hear, otherwise they will jeopardize the venture. Considering the alarming nature of this and many other magical rites, it would seem on the whole less risky to dispense with the supernumeraries, however useful they might be as beasts of burden; and one does not envy their sensations on this occasion, as they watch their master leave the circle and follow Lucifuge towards the treasure. On the way a huge, fierce dog will spring up and attack him (the passionless and

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 155f.

irritable Gnome of the *Clavicle* who is guarding the treasure); the spirit of the person who hid it will also interfere; and in addition to all this the Karcist must perform without error intricate evolutions with the Grand Conjunction inscribed on a sheet of virgin parchment, with one of the coins of the treasure and with one of his own coins. He must now begin to retreat backwards carrying as much of the booty with him as he can, certain at least that the rest will not escape him if he can screw his courage to the sticking-point:

He must, however, take heed not to turn round, whatever noise he may hear, for at this critical moment it will truly seem as if all the mountains in the world were being precipitated upon him. He must for this cause be fortified with special intrepidity, must take fright at nothing, and keep perfectly firm. So acting, he will be led back by the Spirit to the entrance of the circle.<sup>1</sup>

A menacing discharge, in which the blasting rod is metaphorically held over Lucifer's head should disobedience ever be shown in the future, is followed by an act of thanksgiving to God, which concludes the drama.

There is one reference to the Trinity in the text, but no other Christian elements are discernible in this rite, which is based upon the *Clavicles*, containing, however, a new and alarming feature, the menace of the pact. In the *Key 'Solomon'* mentioned the words 'penal bonds' and 'pacts' in the chapter about the experiment of seeking favour and love; but he neither emphasized nor explained them, and stated categorically that the pentacles were all-powerful to preserve the body and soul of the exorcist from harm. Danger to the soul was passed over in silence by the author of the *Lemegeton*; but in the *Grand Grimoire*, Lucifuge brought the matter into the open. The *Grimorium Verum* also had a word or two to say about pacts, but they are vague and not very helpful. He speaks of the tacit and the manifest, says that some spirits bind the operator and that others do not, or only very slightly. The first require something belonging personally to the exorcist, and against such spirits one must be on one's guard; and he also seems to imply in the title that all commerce with evil spirits demands surrendering something to them, if it is to be rewarding. The *Grand Grimoire* tackled the subject more firmly in a thoroughly logical and realistic French

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit., pp. 219f.



spirit. In the rite which has just been considered, Lucifuge first demanded the Karcist's soul at the expiration of fifty years of service; and was then browbeaten by the blasting rod into signing a conditional pact. By this pact the soul of the exorcist is in some degree of peril; and what if the rod had been lacking in any one of the essentials to its magic power?

In that case, says the author of the *Grand Grimoire*, there is no avoiding a pact, if you wish to profit by all the signal, indeed dazzling gifts and powers the evil spirits can bestow upon you, transforming the magician into a very superman. The Kabbalistic circle and the blasting rod will force Infernus to aggrandize you in this fashion; but if you lack the necessary resources to compose these two instruments of magic, then you can only bind the spirits by means of a pact; not with Lucifer, Beelzebuth and Astaroth; they are too high and mighty; but with one of their subordinate spirits, and if possible with one of the chief of these. It will be seen therefore that the pact was a confession of weakness on the part of the magician; and King James was of much the same opinion; he believed that the formidable nature of the magical ritual designed to avert that danger probably frightened the less well equipped among sorcerers, and the more so because it was fraught with perils too:

...when the conjured Spirit appeares, which will not be while after manie circumstances, long praiers, and much muttring and murmuring of the conjurers...how sone I say, he appeares, if they haue missed one iote of all their rites; or if any of their feete once slyd ouer the circle through terror of his feareful apparition, he payes himselfe at that time in his owne hande....I meane hee carries them with him bodie and soule. If this be not now a just cause to make them wearie of these formes of conjuration, I leaue it to you to judge vpon; considering the long-somenesse of the labour, the precise keeping of dayes and houres. ...The terribleness of apparition, and the present perrell that they stande in, in missing the least circumstance or freite, that they ought to obserue: And on the other parte, the Deuil is glad to moouue them to a plaine and square dealing with him...<sup>1</sup>

Conceding that it might not be in every wizard's power to provide himself with the Kabbalistic circle and the blasting rod, the author of the *Grand Grimoire* proceeded to communicate his

<sup>1</sup> King James, *Daemonologie*, 1597; reprint London, 1924, p. 18.

invaluable instructions for the necessary forms and ceremonies to be observed in the making of a pact. It is the only complete and perfect exposition to be found in the printed rituals as far as I am aware, although the chief Faustian ritual indicates a method too. The Karcist in the present text must arm himself with a rod of wild hazel, almost identical with the blasting rod, but evidently without the magnetized steel caps of that instrument of torture; he must also provide himself with the *ématille* and two blessed candles. Proceeding to some isolated spot, either indoors or out of doors, or in some subterranean part of a ruined castle, he must describe a triangle with the bloodstone, and enter this triangle holding the hazel rod, the Grand Conjunction of the Spirit, the *Clavicle*, the pact and the discharge. From this point of vantage he now conjures Lucifer, Beelzebuth and Astaroth to dispatch Lucifuge Rofocale at once in order that the Karcist may make a pact with him. Lucifuge himself is next addressed in threatening terms and coerced by potent words from the *Clavicle*. The response is immediate:

*Manifestation of the Spirit*

Lo! I am here! What dost thou seek of me? Why dost thou disturb my repose? Answer me.

LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE

*Reply to the Spirit*

It is my wish to make a pact with thee, so as to obtain wealth at thy hands immediately, failing which I will torment thee by the potent words of the *Clavicle*.

*The Spirit's Reply*

I cannot comply with thy request except thou dost give thyself over to me in twenty years, to do with thy body and soul as I please.

LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE

Thereupon throw him your pact, which must be written with your own hand, on a sheet of virgin parchment; it should be worded as follows, and signed with your own blood:—I promise the grand Lucifuge to reward him in twenty years' time for all treasures he may give me. In witness whereof I have signed myself

N. N.

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### *Reply of the Spirit*

I cannot grant thy request.

LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE

In order to enforce his obedience, again recite the Supreme Appellation, with the terrible words of the Clavicle, till the spirit reappears, and thus addresses you:—

### *Of the Spirit's Second Manifestation*

Why dost thou torment me further? Leave me to rest, and I will confer upon thee the nearest treasure, on condition that thou dost set apart for me one coin on the first Monday of each month, and dost not call me oftener than once a week, to wit, between ten at night and two in the morning. Take up thy pact; I have signed it. Fail in thy promise, and thou shalt be mine at the end of twenty years.

LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE

### *Reply to the Spirit*

I agree to thy request, subject to the delivery of the nearest treasure which I can at once carry away.

Follow the spirit without fear, cast your pact upon the hoard, touch it with your rod, remove as much as you can, return into the triangle, walking backwards, place the treasure in front of you, and recite the Discharge of the Spirit...<sup>1</sup>

The world-weary Lucifuge of the pact-scene, whose longing for repose reminds one of the Nordic prophetess in the *Edda*, seems to harbour legitimate doubts that he will ever become possessed of the Karcist's soul, and to be making the best of a bad bargain by insisting on his monthly wage and a one day working-week. The evasive language of the pact could indeed hardly escape the notice of the most feeble-minded fiend. This is in harmony with the ambiguity which often surrounds the final fate of sorcerers in legend. Sometimes the devil got his due, and got it earlier than was intended by some trickery in the wording; sometimes the magician managed to foil the fiend by some similar chicanery; and sometimes the Church came to his aid if he repented sincerely. The second course is obviously envisaged here, although not explicitly, and the future destiny of the Karcist is left to our imagination.

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. pp. 225 f.

The *Grand Grimoire* can stand a comparison with the *Key of Solomon*, which is more than can be said for most of the rituals based upon that classic. It is no mere slavish copy, but an independent contribution to the Art of that school, since it introduces and presents the subject of the pact in ritual form, using dialogue and treating the drama thus depicted with all the sobriety and restraint, all the concentration on the one essential point and in the clear-sighted and unflinching manner which we associate with the French classical writers. Nevertheless, in comparison with its model, the sense of spiritual urgency, pressure and awe is slight enough; everything goes by clock-work, and there is little, if any, suspense. On the other hand, by introducing the name of Lucifuge (even though coupled with Rofocale) among the cacophonous host of the *Lemegeton*, the author has done a service to demonology for which it should be grateful.

(c) '*Honorius*'

The rituals attributed to Solomon are fairly consistent in avoiding Christian elements and in keeping more or less closely to the Old Testament for style. But the fourth French ritual to be considered, the famous *Constitution of Honorius*, whilst clinging to the Jewish ceremonial of the *Key*, Christianized or Catholicized the proceedings in a most hair-raising way, and has thus earned for itself the reputation of being the blackest of all the black books of magic. It is certainly one of the most sensational as far as the preamble and the opening rites are concerned, and its attribution to Pope Honorius III (1216-27), although only intended to add to the prestige of the manual, contributed to the fearful *succès de scandale* which the *Constitution* has always enjoyed. One can sympathize with the scandalized on discovering that the introduction is cast in the form of a Papal Bull in which the pseudo-Pope gives sanctionious reasons for communicating to 'all and each of our venerable Brethren of the Holy Roman Church', from the cardinals and archbishops down to the secular clerks, the power of invoking and commanding spirits (rebellious and others) which had hitherto been vested in the Pope alone as the successor to Saint Peter. The first edition of this work was dated 1629, by which time legends of nigromantic Popes had long been in circulation; yet oddly enough

Honorius III is never mentioned among them; legend therefore had no hand in the attribution, which may have been made (as Waite very plausibly suggests) by a confusion with the *Sworn Book of Honorius*, a fourteenth-century magical work with no papal pretensions; or possibly because Honorius III was credited with a work of formularies of exorcism, which set the ball rolling:

The book of Black Magic may be merely a perversion of the orthodox conjurations, and if not that, is a reprisal; it is Sorcery revenging herself on a Pope who casts out devils by representing him as the prince of those who dealt with them.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Williams inclines to think that it was a mere literary exercise, and 'that some leisured cleric took his intellectual recreation in this form';<sup>2</sup> I for my part am convinced that simple utilitarianism was at the bottom of this attribution as indeed of all others: to ensure a market for the wares.

After the scandalous Papal Bull the initial rites and the manner of the invocation are given with the most meticulous attention to procedure and detail. It is an outrageous and a most laborious business. Fasts, prayers, a confession, psalms, litanies, the Mass of the Holy Ghost, the Mass of the Angels, the Office of the Dead, matins, lauds, the Gospel of St John, the recital of the seventy-two sacred names of God alternate rhythmically with the slaughter and mutilation of a black cock, whose eyes, tongue and heart must be torn out and reduced to powder; the immolation of a lamb, its skinning and the subsequent tanning of the hide; the composition and inscription of innumerable weird characters and signs. If these activities are sufficiently incongruous to provoke uneasy feelings, the abstraction of the oblation of the Mass, of the consecrated wine and part of the consecrated host, seems like desecration pointing straight to the abominations of the Black Mass. Desecration it certainly is, in the same sense as 'Solomon's' exalted prayer to God in an experiment which demanded the fat of a dead man and strips of his winding-sheet. But nothing was further from the muddled not to say addled minds of the false King and the pseudo-Pope. The latter needed the sacred elements for their wonder-working or

<sup>1</sup> Waite, *op. cit.* p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> C. Williams, *Witchcraft*, London, 1941, p. 246.

magical power, and stole them for his preposterous ceremony in a reverent and awe-stricken state of mind:

Deliver us, O Lord, from the fear of hell. Let not the demons destroy my soul when I shall raise them from the deep pit, when I shall command them to do my will. May the day be bright, may the sun and moon shine forth, when I shall call upon them. Terrible of aspect are they, deformed and horrible to sight; but do Thou restore unto them their angelic shapes when I shall impose my will upon them. O Lord, deliver me from those of the dread visage, and grant that they shall be obedient when I shall raise them up from hell, when I shall impose my will upon them.<sup>1</sup>

This prayer alone shows that no parody of any sort was intended, although it is difficult indeed to think oneself into the mind of a man who, as Williams puts it

...could bring himself, after saying a Mass to the Holy Ghost, to tear the eyes from a black cock as a part of the same operation...<sup>2</sup>

The fierce yet fearful determination manifest in the prayer just quoted having propelled the operator through all the ceremonies, slaughters and gyrations I have indicated as well as the composition of pentacles and the construction of instruments, he may now, about a month from the beginning of the operation, proceed to the actual invocation. The circle having been traced 'with charcoal or holy water, sprinkled with the wood of the blessed Cross', the Universal Conjunction is pronounced. This is designed to constrain the spirit N. by the Eucharist, by the name and power of the members of the Trinity, and

...by the great Names of the God of gods and Lord of lords, ADONAY, TETRAGRAMMATON, JEHOVA, TETRAGRAMMATON, ADONAY, JEHOVA, OTHEOS, ATHANATOS, ISCHYROS, AGLA, PENTAGRAMMATON, SADAY, SADAY, SADAY, JEHOVA, OTHEOS, ATHANATOS, à *Liciat* TETRAGRAMMATON, ADONAY, ISCHYROS, ATHANATOS, SADY, SADY, SADY, CADOS, CADOS, CADOS, ELOY, AGLA, AGLA, AGLA, ADONAY, ADONAY...by the ineffable names of God, to wit, Gog and Magog, which I am unworthy to pronounce...<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, op. cit. p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 242.

The unexpected appearance of Gog and Magog amongst the holy names of God must I think be put down to the ignorance of 'Honorius', and to nothing more sinister in intention than his determination to force the 'Evil and Accursed Serpent, N.'

...to appear forthwith under a beautiful and well-favoured human form of soul and body, and to fulfil my behests without any deceit whatsoever...without tarrying, without companions, without grievance, without noise, deformity, or murmuring....Otherwise St Michael, the invisible Archangel, shall presently blast thee in the utmost depths of hell.<sup>1</sup>

After a second short but evidently effective summons taken from the *Lemegeton* and the exhibition of the Pentacle of Solomon, the Evil and Accursed Serpent N. presumably manifests without more ado and fulfils the operator's behests, for a short and friendly discharge is now given followed by an even briefer thanksgiving to God. One joins in the latter as heartily as in the doxology after an unexpectedly short sermon. For the fearful elaborations and never-ending complexities of the preparatory rites had led one to expect an interminable series of invocations. Even the dramatically-minded will probably be glad to dispense on this occasion with recalcitrant fiends, mysterious manifestations and ambitious requests. As for the sensationally-minded, the Papal Bull and the initial rites have catered nobly for them.

'Honorius', however, was by no means weary yet of well doing. The Universal Conjunction had come to an end, but he had several more tricks up his sleeve, foremost amongst them the Conjunction of the Book. This would have been more useful, if he had thrown any light upon the Book in question, which is undoubtedly the *Liber Spirituum* described by Pseudo-Agrippa, one version of which was printed by Wierus and Scot and enshrined in the opening pages of the *Lemegeton*. Taking the knowledge of this work for granted, 'Honorius' gave the text of the command to the spirits to receive and accept it:

I conjure and command you, O Spirits, all and so many as ye are, to accept this Book with good grace, so that whensoever we may read it... you shall be constrained to appear in comely human form....In no circumstances shall you make any attempt upon the body, soul, or spirit of the reader, nor inflict any harm on those who may accompany him,

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. pp. 241 ff.

either by mutterings, tempests, noise, scandals, nor yet by lesion or by hindrance in the execution of the commands of this Book. I conjure you to appear immediately when the conjuration is made, to execute without dallying all that is written and enumerated in its proper place in the said book. You shall obey, serve, instruct, impart, and perform all in your power for the benefit of those who command you, and the whole without illusion... and ye are all hereby enjoined by the Most Holy Names of the Omnipotent Living God, ELOYM, JAH, EL, ELOY, TETRAGRAMMATON, to fulfil everything as it is set forth above. If ye obey me not, I will force you to abide in torments for a thousand years, as also if any one of you receive not this Book with entire resignation to the will of the reader.<sup>1</sup>

This is certainly calculated to bring each and all of the spirits to heel and to put them into the right frame of mind to affix their seals to the Book which, we are told, they must now be commanded to do. 'Honorius', satisfied on this score, then turned his attention to the Kings of the East, South, West and North (MAGOA, EGYM, BAYMON, AMAYMON), deriving from the *Lemegeton*, and commanded them to appear before him, or to send their subordinates to execute his wishes. The conjurations for the first three are short and unimpressive; but Amaymon is invoked in a most solemn and lengthy manner by details and amplifications of the mysteries of the Gospels, and one's skin positively crawls as one reads some of them:

I conjure thee by God the Father, by God the Son, by God the Holy Ghost, by the Mother of Jesus Christ, Holy Mother and perpetual Virgin, by her sacred heart, by her blessed milk, which the Son of the Father sucked, by her most holy body and soul, by all the parts and members of the Virgin, by all the sufferings, afflictions, labours, agonies which she endured during the whole course of her life, by all the sighs she uttered, by the holy tears which she shed whilst her dear Son wept before the time of His dolorous passion and on the tree of the Cross... I adjure thee, furthermore, by the crown of thorns which was set upon His head, by the blood which flowed from His feet and hands, by the nails with which He was nailed to the tree of the Cross, by the holy tears which He shed, by all which He suffered willingly through great love of us: by the lungs, the heart, the hair, the inward parts, and by all the members of our Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 249f. This may well be a 'perversion' of an orthodox exorcism of evil spirits.



A pall of blackness does indeed hang over this conjuration, although fortunately the reason for invoking Amaymon to come in a comely human form, swiftly and obediently, is not stated; for if it were it would certainly make this exorcism seem yet more blasphemous; although once more the reverse intention is obvious enough on reflexion. It is a relief, and indeed in the nature of a comic relief, to turn from the invocation of the King of the North to those addressed to the spirits governing each day of the week (LUCIFER, FRIMOST, ASTAROTH, SILCHARDE, BECHARD, GULAND, SURGAT, who also adorn the *Grimorium Verum*). These demons are introduced with their circles, the times at which to summon them, in some cases the benefits to be obtained from them and in all but one the offerings to be made to them. Lucifer must be given a mouse; Frimost a stone; Silcharde a little bread; Bechard must have a nut; Guland some burnt bread; Surgat will ask for a hair of your head, but must be forced to accept one of a fox instead.

European traders, fobbing off savages with glass beads, yield the palm to 'Honorius', who was evidently following the *Grimorium Verum* rather than the *Grand Grimoire* in the matter of the law of exchange between sorcerers and devils. The pompous Papal Bull, let alone the prayer quoted above, have hardly prepared us for this descent into the ridiculous; but few indeed are the modern magical rituals which can keep to the heights laboriously scaled in the preambles and introductory prayers. 'Honorius', however, attempted a last ascent in a 'very powerful conjuration' addressed to all the demons 'dwelling in these parts' to surrender the treasures hidden there:

Go, all Spirits accursed, who are condemned to the flame eternal which is prepared for you and your companions, if ye be rebellious and disobedient. I conjure you... I exhort and call you, I constrain and command you, by all the powers of your superior demons, to come, obey, and reply positively to what I direct you in the name of Jesus Christ. Whence, if you or they do not obey promptly and without tarrying, I will shortly increase your torments for a thousand years in hell.<sup>1</sup>

This is slightly better, it must be owned, than the exchange and barter with the spirits of the days of the week; but if, as Williams suggests, the *Constitution of Honorius* is really a literary exercise,

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 260.

then it must be condemned out of hand for its fearful lack of taste, its inequalities in style, its recurrent imbecility, and its undramatic nature. The nineteenth-century French occultist, Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse Louis Constant, c. 1810-75), himself a brilliant writer, was well aware of these deficiencies in a rite which nevertheless sensationally speaking was full of promise. He set out to correct the total impression 'Honorius' conveyed by his own highly romantic rendering:

The Bull of the infernal pontiff follows, and the mystery of darksome evocations is expounded therein with a terrific knowledge concealed under superstitious and sacrilegious forms. Fastings, watchings, profanation of mysteries, allegorical ceremonies and bloody sacrifices are combined with artful malice. The evocations are not deficient in poetry or in enthusiasm, mingled with horror. For example, the author ordains that an operator should rise at midnight on the Thursday in the first week of evocations, should sprinkle his room with holy water and light a taper of yellow wax—prepared on the previous day and pierced in the form of a cross. By the uncertain light of this candle, he must enter a church alone and read the Office of the Dead in a low voice, substituting in place of the ninth lesson at Matins the following rhythmic invocation which is here translated from the Latin, preserving its strange form and its refrains, which recall the monotonous incantations of old-world sorcerers.

O Lord, deliver me from the infernal terrors,  
Exempt my spirit from sepulchral larvae;  
To seek them out I shall go down to their hell unaffrighted:  
I shall impose my will for a law upon them.

I will call upon night and its darkness to bring forth splendour:  
Rise up, O Sun; and Moon, be thou white and brilliant;  
To the shades of hell I will speak and confess no terror:  
I shall impose my will for a law upon them.

Dreadful in aspect are they, their forms in appearance fantastic:  
I will that the demons shall once again become angels.  
Whence to their nameless distortion I speak, never fearing:  
I shall impose my will for a law upon them.

These shades are illusions evoked by the eye affrighted;  
I and I only can heal their loveliness blasted,  
And unto the deeps of hell I plunge unaffrighted:  
I shall impose my will for a law unto them.

After many other ceremonies there comes the night of evocation. In a sinister place, in the light of a fire kindled with broken crosses, a circle is traced with the embers of a cross, reciting while so doing a magical hymn containing versicles of several psalms. . . . One seems to hear the sombre puritans of Walter Scott or Victor Hugo accompanying, with fanatic psalmody, the nameless work of sorcerers in *Faust*, or *Macbeth*.

In a conjuration addressed to the shade of the giant Nimrod, the wild huntsman who began the Tower of Babel, the adept of Honorius menaces that ancient reprobate with the riveting of his chains and with torture increased daily, should he fail in immediate obedience to the will of the operator. It is the sublimity of pride in delirium, and this anti-pope, who could only understand a high-priest as a ruler of hell, seems to yearn after the usurped and mournful right of tormenting the dead eternally, as if in revenge for the contempt and rejection of the living.<sup>1</sup>

This fine piece of writing, admirably translated by Waite, drew from that conscientious scholar several protests in footnotes about its lack of accuracy; and Lévi certainly diffused a glamour over the *Constitution of Honorius* which was not there originally. By rejecting the authorship of Honorius III and ingeniously fathering the manual on the anti-Pope who styled himself Honorius II, Lévi managed to have it both ways: to clear a sovereign pontiff of the Church of his childhood from a calumny and to retain for the magical manual the fearful fascination attendant on the spiritual perversion of priests. His wonderful verse-rendering of the stark prose of a striking prayer, his rewording and interpretation throughout transform this pretentious, utilitarian document with its grotesqueness and its bathos into something darkly beautiful, perverted and strange.

The aesthetic instinct was very strong in Lévi; it rose to meet the kindred spirit inherent in ritual and developed it along its own sombre lines in the rite of black magic which he composed by selecting and grouping together all the worst features in the *grimoires* known to him and inventing others even more horrific to match. In doing this he romanticized and falsified the literature in question almost beyond recognition, bedevilling it with the powers of an imagination both sophisticated and sinister and vitalized by a fearful half-belief:

<sup>1</sup> E. Lévi, *History of Magic*, tr. Waite, London, n.d., pp. 303 ff.

*Conditions of Success in Infernal Evocations*

- (1) Invincible obstinacy; (2) a conscience at once hardened to crime and most prone to remorse and fear; (3) affected or natural ignorance; (4) blind faith in all that is incredible; (5) an utterly false idea of God.

We must afterwards (1) profane the ceremonies of the cultus in which we believe; (2) offer a bloody sacrifice; (3) procure a magic fork, which is a branch of a single bough of hazel or almond, cut at one blow with the new knife used for the sacrifice. It must terminate in a fork, which must be armoured with iron or steel, made from the blade of the knife before mentioned. A fast of fifteen days must be observed, taking a single unsalted repast after sundown. It should consist of black bread and blood, seasoned with unsalted spices or black beans and milky and narcotic herbs. We must get drunk every five days after sundown on wine in which five heads of black poppies and five ounces of pounded hemp-seed have been steeped for five hours, the infusion being strained through a cloth woven by a prostitute: strictly speaking, the first cloth which comes to hand may be used, should it have been woven by a woman. The evocation should be performed on the night between Monday and Tuesday, or that between Friday and Saturday. A solitary and forbidden spot must be chosen, such as a cemetery haunted by evil spirits, a dreaded ruin in the country, the vaults of an abandoned convent, a place where some murder has been committed, a druidic altar or an old temple of idols. A black seamless and sleeveless robe must be provided; a leaden cap emblazoned with the signs of the moon, Venus and Saturn; two candles of human fat set in black wooden candlesticks, carved in the shape of a crescent; two crowns of vervain; a magical sword with a black handle; the magical fork; a copper vase containing the blood of the victim; a censer holding perfumes, namely, incense, camphor, aloes, ambergris and storax, mixed together with the blood of a goat, a mole and a bat; four nails taken from the coffin of an executed criminal; the head of a black cat which has been nourished on human flesh for five days; a bat drowned in blood; the horns of a goat *cum quo puella concubuerit*; and the skull of a parricide.<sup>1</sup>

As far as my knowledge of *grimoires* goes, this is a fearful libel on their initial rites: and Waite confirms this view. Lévi's instructions would make 'Solomon' turn in his grave, and even cause 'Honorius' to stir in it. Whilst keeping some of the more questionable paraphernalia to witness against the rituals, he has added much more gruesome ones, and inverted the solemn religious purifications,

<sup>1</sup> E. Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, tr. Waite, London, n.d. pp. 388 ff.

both spiritual and material, into diabolical parodies. In fact, he is doing for the *grimoires* what they are falsely accused of doing for Catholic ceremonial: perverting and parodying them. He may of course have been drawing from other sources too; but he only mentions the *Grand Grimoire*, the *Magical Elements* of Peter of Abano and Pseudo-Agrippa, all of whom are innocent of sacrilegious intentions and of most of the horrors he describes.

One is therefore right to treat with the utmost scepticism the necromantic process which he claims to be citing from the *Grand Grimoire* or its modern version the *Red Dragon*; Waite has been unable to find it in any of the editions known to him, or indeed in any other ritual; and it would seem to be quite impossible to carry out because of the publicity of the proceedings, of which half way through Lévi begins to make fun himself:

The end of procedure in Black Magic was to disturb reason and produce the feverish excitement which emboldens to great crimes. The *Grimoires*, once seized and burnt by authority everywhere, are certainly not harmless books. Sacrilege, murder, theft, are indicated as means to realization in almost all these works. . . . There are also necromantic processes, comprising the tearing up of earth from graves with the nails, dragging out bones, placing them crosswise on the breast, then assisting at midnight mass on Christmas Eve, and flying out of the church at the moment of consecration, crying: 'Let the dead rise from their tombs!' Thereafter the procedure involves returning to the graveyard, taking a handful of earth nearest to the coffin, running to the door of the church, which has been alarmed by the clamour, depositing the two bones crosswise and again shouting: 'Let the dead rise from their tombs!' If the operator escapes being seized and shut up in a madhouse, he must retire at a slow pace, and count four thousand five hundred steps in a straight line, which means following a broad road or scaling walls. Having traversed this space, he lies down upon the earth, as if in a coffin, and repeats in lugubrious tones: 'Let the dead rise from their tombs!' Finally, he calls thrice the person whose apparition is desired. No doubt anyone who is mad enough and wicked enough to abandon himself to such operations is pre-disposed to all chimeras and all phantoms. Hence the recipe of the GRAND GRIMOIRE is most efficacious, but we advise none of our readers to test it.<sup>1</sup>

Here, although not in the other passage, Lévi seems to be writing with his tongue in his cheek, moved to saturnine mirth by

<sup>1</sup> Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 364f.

the imbecilities he was describing or inventing or embellishing. Certain it is that his works on magic belong more truly to literature than to the science of the occult; his poetical enthusiasms, his riotous imagination, his vivid style make his books the despair of serious students and the delight of amateurs; for he transforms the subject of magic (arid, abstruse, wearisome and hardly intelligible in some of its aspects) into something both radiant and sinister, satanic and sublime. Here, therefore, is another aesthetic development of ceremonial magic: semi-fictitious works founded upon fact; in this particular instance the sensational novel emerging from ritual. France contributed on the one hand the dramatic scene of the signing of the pact, treated with restraint and even realistically; on the other hand she introduced a note of lurid horror which was to culminate in Huysmans' *Là-bas*.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DISCIPLES OF 'SOLOMON'

#### (a) *Bluebeard of Orleans*

To christen Gilles de Rais (1404-40) Bluebeard of Orleans is by no means to join the band of those who accept his confession as gospel truth, nor yet to adopt his identification with the hero of folklore immortalized by Perrault in 1697. It is rather in order to lay stress both on the extreme gallantry Gilles displayed with Jeanne d'Arc before Orleans and elsewhere, and on the legendary nature of the tales of horror spread about him, that this title has been chosen. There are few darker and more revolting stories in the annals of cruelty and crime than those related by Gilles and his associates before the Ecclesiastical and Civil Courts in 1440; but they have little in common with those committed by the Bluebeard of legend save the atmosphere of evil and the reek of blood. Yet, since they were extorted by means of torture from his so-called accomplices, and confirmed by Gilles after the threat of like treatment (and possibly the treatment itself) had broken his nerve, they are probably quite as fictitious as those attributed to his mythical namesake. There is therefore a symbolical reason for allowing the name of Bluebeard to cling to him still.

It may be thought inconsistent, to put it mildly, that I am inclined to accept with some reservations the highly suspect evidence produced during the trials in so far as it relates to magic; whereas I have been convinced by the arguments of Reinach, Hernandez and others that Gilles was the victim of a conspiracy to secure his lands and his rapidly diminishing fortune, and that the charges of sodomy, sadism and mass-murder of children were false. But there are valid reasons for both conclusions. In the first place, it is difficult to believe that a man of such proven gallantry and so deeply religious as Gilles could ever have committed such terrible crimes; and in the second the details supplied by the accused and his 'accomplices' are bald and unconvincing. Whereas one can perfectly well imagine a man in that age and in dire financial straits having recourse first to alchemy and then to black magic in order



Gilles de Rais





to replenish his coffers; and I shall have failed indeed in the previous chapter if it has not become clear by now that such practices were by no means incompatible with strong religious beliefs. Moreover, Prelati was assuredly a magician; the descriptions of the various evocations tally with the instructions found in ritual texts, and a closer scrutiny reveals an all-too-likely state of affairs.

Gilles de Rais had almost squandered away his colossal fortune with a recklessness and a lust for ostentation which certainly suggest a dangerous disregard of physical limitations, when he turned to magic as a practical means of retrieving his wealth. The chronology of events described by him during the trial is far from clear; but he seems to have made use first of local talent and then to have imported magicians from Italy. A trumpeter called de Mesnil, a certain Louis, a Jean de la Rivière, an anonymous sorcerer and a Master Antony of Palermo had at one time or another conducted magical ceremonies for the Lord de Rais, always with the same end in view: the acquisition of knowledge, riches and power in order to regain his former state of dominion and glory. Gilles continually attended the conjurations performed by these so-called magicians, but nothing ever happened. It seems to have been de Mesnil who first proposed that the accused should prepare a grant signed with blood drawn from his little finger promising the devil certain things (Gilles could not remember what), but explicitly reserving his soul and life. This bait was offered in vain, the evil spirit held back, and the trumpeter faded away. Jean de la Rivière was no more successful, but rather more crafty. He returned from a private ceremony held in a grove with a terrifying tale of having met the devil in the shape of a leopard, an encounter which had frightened him half out of his wits in spite of being fully armed and provided with a sword for his protection. The devil having refused to utter on this occasion, Jean promised to try again, and meanwhile obtained a good round sum from Gilles to spend on magical equipment. He then absconded and was heard of no more, having gone while the going was good. The anonymous wizard among this happy band of tricksters staged something rather more plausible in a room in the castle of Tiffauges. A certain Gilles de Sillé had discovered him, and seems to have been his accomplice:

...de Sillé himself did not attempt to enter the circle or circular sign made in the said room for the invocation, nay, rather, he withdrew to a

window of that room with the intention of jumping out if he should feel anything terrible approach, there holding in his arms an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the said accused [Gilles] standing within the circular sign, feared very much, and especially as the said invocator forbade him to make the sign of the cross, as otherwise they, the accused and the invocator, would be in great danger, nor did the accused for this reason attempt to make that sign, but then remembering a certain prayer of the Blessed Virgin Mary which begins 'Alma [Redemptoris Mater]', said invocator ordered the said accused to go out of the circle, and withdrawing quickly and going out of the room, the invocator being left remaining there, and the door of the room being closed by the above-said invocator, he went to the aforesaid Gilles de Sillé...<sup>1</sup>

This confederate, who had obviously escaped out of the window according to plan, told de Rais that the exorcist was being mercilessly beaten and apparently kicked. Gilles himself heard nothing; but sure enough, on returning to the scene of operations, they found the sorcerer lying face downwards, and seemingly so grievously wounded that the Lord de Rais, despairing of his life, insisted that he should receive the sacrament of the confession. The rogue, however, recovered from the trouncing, which one cannot but suspect was administered by de Sillé to hoodwink de Rais. Be that as it may nothing further was heard of his nigromantic skill.

It seems to have been after this bastinado that Gilles procured from Italy the priest called François Prelati, from whom he expected great things, and who was probably rather better equipped than de Mesnil, Rivière *e tutti quanti*. Moreover, according to the accused, he had an attractive personality and was a cultured and intelligent man:

Interrogated why he thus kept in his house and about his person the afore-mentioned François, he made answer that François was clever, valuable to him, and pleasant company because he spoke Latin beautifully and charmingly, and because, furthermore, he showed himself anxious concerning the proper administration of his affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Summoned from Florence for the purpose of invoking demons, Prelati claimed to possess incantations by means of which he could cause a certain devil called Barron to come whenever he wished.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wilson, *Bluebeard Gilles de Retz 1404-1440*, New York, and London, 1899, pp. 154f. Cf. also Ludovico Hernandez, *Le Procès Inquisitorial de Gilles de Rais*, Paris, 1921, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.* p. 150.

In other words, he was the fortunate possessor of a familiar spirit, and therefore a magician in a big way. Gilles attended three of his invocations in all. One was held in the Château Tiffauges of sinister memory; one in Bourgneuf de Retz, and the last in a place which the accused could not recall:

Besides, the selfsame defendant declared and confessed that during these invocations there were traced as characters on the ground figures of a circle and a cross, and that the same François possessed a book which he had carried about his person, as he used to say, which contained many names of demons and formulae for the making of such conjurations and invocations of demons, which names and formulae he, defendant, could not remember; that the said François held and read this book for about two hours during and for each invocation; but that at none of his own conjurations or invocations the defendant saw or noticed any devil, and that none spoke to him, at which he, defendant, was most displeased and vexed.<sup>1</sup>

The book was probably a *Liber Spirituum* on *Lemegeton* lines, in which case one can well believe that Gilles could remember none of the names he heard, nor any of the formulae; for the names were outlandish, and the invocations of considerable length. A cross (or the Tau) was often traced in the magic circle as a means of protection; and one would have been inclined to label Prelati's magic as whiter than that of the anonymous sorcerer who deprecated the sign of the cross and prayers (those constant features of ceremonial magic), had it not been for the following circumstances. After the first abortive invocation, Prelati informed Gilles that Barron had appeared to him privately and had explained that, as Gilles had not fulfilled his promise, he had naturally refrained from putting in an appearance. Gilles was sorely puzzled as to where the failure lay, since he had promised, and was ready to perform, anything that Barron might ask, with the single exception of his life and soul. It was either then or subsequently that Prelati demanded the limb or limbs of some infant as a sacrifice, and Gilles gave to the magician the hand, heart and eyes of a child to offer to Barron. This fearful request comes deadly close to the Black Mass, but there is nothing to show that the child was slain for the purpose. The sacrifice having had no concrete results, Gilles attended the second invocation with a grant written and signed with his own hand, making

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, op. cit. pp. 146f.

further promises, although again he declared that he could not remember their tenure, save that once again he reserved his life and soul. There he stood, the deed in his hand, his signature appended in the vernacular, ready, willing and anxious to hand over the document to Barron when he appeared. And once more no Barron and no other spirit, no voice, no manifestation of any sort. The invocation, the blood-sacrifice, the promised compact, all had been in vain.

Prelati tried to soften the bitter blow in much the same manner as Rivi re had done; both presumably having hoped to induce hallucination in their patron, and neither having succeeded, both fell back upon tarradiddles. Having announced to Gilles that he proposed making an invocation which he would not allow his disciple to attend, he then reported when it was over

...that, if he had been present at the invocation, he would have run great risk, for at that invocation there came and appeared a serpent to the same Fran ois which filled him with great fear: hearing this the said defendant after taking and causing to be carried near him a particle of the True Cross in his possession, expressed a longing to go to the spot of the said invocation where the said Fran ois claimed to have seen the reptile. This, however, he did not in deference to Fran ois's prohibition.<sup>1</sup>

Not even this tall story aroused any scepticism in the mind of Gilles, who was too much under the domination of Prelati to disbelieve him, or to disobey his command to avoid the spot where the reptile had been seen by the magician. It was clearly time to make a special effort and practise some hocus-pocus:

Again, the same Gilles de Retz, defendant, declared and confessed that at one of the three aforesaid invocations at which he assisted... the said Fran ois informed him that he, Fran ois, had seen the said *Barron* who showed him a large quantity of gold and, among other things, an ingot of gold; but the said defendant said he had seen neither the devil nor the said ingot but only a sort of gold-leaf [*auripelli aurum-pellis(?)*] under the form of a leaf of gold which he, defendant, did not touch.<sup>2</sup>

And that 'sort of gold-leaf', which he was not even allowed to touch, was all that his would-be intercourse with the devil ever procured for Gilles de Rais. Although this Bluebeard of history was, on his own showing, practising black magic, one's heart rather goes

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, op. cit. pp. 148f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 149.

out to him in his earnest, honest and fruitless endeavours to get in touch with the devil and then to touch him for gold. And perhaps after all it was not only Prelati who was wily in the matter. Satan may have been wily too. In his efforts to procure wizards for his master, Gilles de Sillé once met an old woman, who told him that unless the Lord de Rais removed his heart from the Church and from his own chapel, he would never succeed. And another wise-woman spoke to the same effect. But Gilles wanted to have it both ways and could not tear his heart from the Church nor jeopardize his soul. Meanwhile he went on raking the country-side for sorcerers but in vain. A man was found; but on his very way to Gilles he accidentally fell into a river and was drowned. Another, summoned to pronounce invocations, died before he could begin. It almost looked like a conspiracy on the part of the spirits to force Bluebeard to surrender his soul. He himself, desisting at last, attributed his long series of unmitigated failures to the special mercy of God.

His is undoubtedly a curious case, that of a man positively asking to be deceived, and incapable of being deluded. Yet he was anything but an *esprit fort*; quite as superstitious as his contemporaries, he clung to a particle of the True Cross to protect him against Prelati's serpent. He believed every word de Mesnil, Rivière, de Sillé and Prelati said. He never doubted the leopard, the dragon, the materialization of Barron, the mountain of gold. But he never saw them, strain his eyes though he might. He never even imagined that he heard a voice; he was never aware of disembodied presences. He was utterly credulous and in a state of spiritual confusion bordering on insanity. But his senses were completely dependable and incapable of delusion. He must have been the despair of the many and various wizards who attempted to impose on him. He is the admiration of those who scrutinize the records of practical magic. Even in the agony of mind and soul in which he made his confession, he was absolutely clear and positive about the facts he had observed. From this strangely reliable witness only negative results can be obtained.

The revelations of the magician-in-chief Prelati naturally have less evidential value than those of his dupe; but they fill in the picture of a series of frauds practised on Gilles de Rais which the latter unconsciously sketched in his confession. Prelati stuck to it at the

trial that the familiar spirit Barron often appeared to him in the shape of a comely young man of twenty-four or thereabouts when Gilles was not there; and he gave a very odd reason for the demon's refusal to gladden the Lord de Rais with his presence. The latter had been ordered by Barron through Prelati to feed three beggars thrice annually at Church festivals, and had only done so once, on All Souls' Day, a fact confirmed by Gilles. This partial disobedience was now supposed to have angered the evil spirit. One can only imagine that Prelati was playing on Gilles' religious temperament by inventing such an incongruous order, and that the latter had unaccountably forgotten about it after complying with it once. But the story hardly makes sense, and one can far more easily believe the magician's statement that Gilles was subject to recurrent fits of remorse during which he more than once announced his intention of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem accompanied by Prelati. This evil genius of the Lord de Rais made no bones about confessing to the horrible advice that some part or parts of a child should be offered to Barron instead of a cock, hen, dove or pigeon if Gilles greatly desired to see him. Gilles brought the parts already mentioned, in a glass. Prelati maintained that he did not know whether or not the dismembered infant was a child whom he had seen dead at Tiffauges. It is therefore possible, supposing the story to be true, that no infanticide was committed, although the desecration of the corpse remains a very dark blot on Gilles' escutcheon; especially if, as Prelati declared, they thereupon invoked Barron for the purpose of offering him this sacrifice. As no evil spirit appeared, the remains were buried in consecrated ground.

If Gilles were really a party to this deed, he must have been well-nigh demented by the failure which attended so desperate an effort, and this again may account for Prelati's fairy-story of the dragon and the gold, of which he gave a more coherent account than his dupe:

...he [Prelati] made an invocation at Tiffauges, at which Barron appeared in the shape of a man, of whom in the name of the said Gilles he asked for riches; and afterwards he saw in a room the appearance of a great quantity of gold in ingots which was there for several days, which he wished to touch as soon as he saw it, and was told by the evil spirit not to touch it, that it was not yet time. And he went to the said Gilles

who asked if he could see it and he, witness, said yes; and both went to the said chamber; and as he, witness, came to the door of the chamber a great serpent appeared, green in colour, as big as a dog; and he told Gilles to beware of entering the chamber, for he had just seen a serpent, at which Gilles, frightened, took to flight, he, witness, following him. Afterwards the said Gilles took a cross in which was a particle of the True Cross, and thus protected went into the said room; and he, witness, said that it was not good to have the Blessed Cross in this affair, and then he, witness, went into the said room and touched the aforesaid appearance of gold, and perceived that it was only dust of a tawny colour, and by that he recognized the falsity of the evil spirits.<sup>1</sup>

Much more obviously one recognizes by that the falsity of the magician and the nature of the comedy played out for the befooling of the wretched Gilles. To contemporary minds the fraud would be much less evident; and the Lord de Rais was a true child of those times, which could swallow anything seasoned with magic, the magicians themselves being quite as often deluded as not. One cannot, however, believe in the subjective truth of Prelati's stories, although he was probably the only person at the trial who was not convinced of their reality. Here, if anywhere, was the *esprit fort*, the enlightened individual, to whom Ibsen was later to assign such a liberating if sometimes devastating part in his tragedies. In the tragedy of Bluebeard of Orleans he seems to have escaped scot-free; and the only cathartic moment in the whole dark drama is the description by yet another ambiguous associate of Gilles (the priest called Blanchet who had fetched Prelati from Florence) of a very severe beating to which the magician was on one occasion treated by the fiend. One hardly ventures to hope that this story was founded on fact.

The details given by Gilles, Prelati and others of the invocations performed at Tiffauges and elsewhere justify the inclusion of the Lord de Rais among the disciples of Solomon, although in most cases a Christianized text seems to have been used, whilst the anonymous sorcerer may have been implementing a darker rite. In the pre-Prelati days according to the Act of Accusation, Antonio of Palermo and Louis in the presence of Gilles invoked the evil spirits Oriens, Beelzebuth, Sathan and Belial. Now the Lord of the East figures prominently in the *Lemegeton*, and also in the versions

<sup>1</sup> Hernandez, op. cit. pp. 73f.



given by Wierus and Scot, as one of the four supremely potent spirits of evil who rule the descending hierarchy. It is true that the name of Oriens has been replaced by others in the various lists, but his designation as King of the East remains and Orient is met with in a French manuscript in Trinity College, Cambridge as well as in *Schemhamphoras*. It goes back to the *Testament of Solomon* if not further. Here, therefore, is a fairly definite pointer to a Solomonian text. Besides the book of invocations described by Gilles as belonging to Prelati, the latter gave some account of a second *grimoire* which Gilles obtained from an acquaintance. This was bound in black leather and consisted of some paper and some parchment leaves with red rubrics containing invocations to the demons and several other things touching medicine and astrology. The evil spirits were said to have the power to reveal hidden treasure, instruct in philosophy and generally guide those who desired it. They should be offered a cock, a dove, a pigeon or a turtle-dove in order to placate them and render them easy of access. Prelati gave one of the formulae:

Conjuro vos Baron, Sathan, Belial, Belsebut, by the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, by the Virgin Mary and all the Saints, to appear before us and to speak to us, and do our bidding.<sup>1</sup>

According to the same informant, Gilles' proposed pact with Barron was equally simple:

Come at my bidding and I will give you whatever you ask, except my soul and the diminution of my life.<sup>2</sup>

He also testified to an invocation contemplated by himself and Gilles in which a stone called *diadocus* and a crested bird were to have been used, but which had to be abandoned as the stone was unprocurable. The *Grand Grimoire* it will be remembered recommended a bloodstone for the rite of Lucifuge, and two of Gilles' servants mentioned a magnetic stone as forming part of the ceremony given below, in which description it is referred to as magnetic dust. Blanchet added to the rather scanty accounts of the texts used a probably apocryphal manuscript of five or six leaves with large margins written in red in Gilles' hand with crosses and other signs in red. He quite unnecessarily 'supposed' that it must have

<sup>1</sup> Hernandez, op. cit. pp. 68f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 72.

been engrossed with human blood. As regards the ceremonies themselves, Prelati as the magician-in-chief ought perhaps to be quoted:

...having lights or torches of wax and other things, with the said book which they took with them, they made several circles with characters and signs like coats of arms with the point of a sword on the ground, that is to say in the great lower hall of the castle of Tiffauges...after the construction of the circle and characters and having lit the fire, all the above-named at the command of Gilles de Retz left the said hall and the said Gilles and he [Prelati] entered the circle; and in the angles near the walls they made other characters, lit the coal in the earthen pots and strewed magnetic powder on it and incense, myrrh, aloes, from which a fragrant smoke arose; and they remained there, sometimes standing, sometimes seated and sometimes with bent knees, adoring and sacrificing to the demons, for about the space of two hours, invoking and with intent to invoke the demon, sometimes reading to him from the said book and waiting for the demon invoked to appear, but on this occasion, or so he declares, nothing appeared.<sup>1</sup>

Those waiting outside, however, distinctly heard noises as of a four-footed monster walking on the roof and trying to get in through the sky-light, and they also felt a great blast of ice-cold wind rushing through the castle.

'Adoring and sacrificing to the demons'; the appalling human offering, the prohibition to make the sign of the cross: these are the signs and tokens of a magic blacker than that to be found in the Solomonic texts where on the contrary the demons are very severely handled, where no human sacrifice is ever advocated, and where holy signs abound. There is a notable absence too of those threats, curses and roastings of which 'Solomon' was so prolific. But here again the fact that Gilles' confession was extorted from him privately may account for public omissions of details which would tend to make the performances seem less dark, and for additions which would blacken them still more. They were damning enough to secure for Bluebeard of Orleans a leading place in the mighty army of Satanists who pullulate in a certain type of fiction and lead such a tenacious and strenuous existence in a certain type of mind, forever indulging in 'nameless orgies' and forever

<sup>1</sup> Hernandez, *op. cit.* p. 68. This book was the one procured by Gilles from an acquaintance. The loadstone was supposed to be a sure defence against all the machinations of evil spirits.

conducting 'foul rites'. It seems at least highly unlikely that a ceremony in which the demons were invoked by the Trinity, the Virgin Mary and the Saints included instructions for worshipping the fiends; and the faint but persistent Solomonic flavour which hangs round the description of the rite mocks at the suggestion. It seems almost certain that a *Liber Spirituum* from a Solomonic source was the much talked-of book which Prelati brought with him from Italy, and that another such manual was made use of by Antonio of Palermo and Louis. There is therefore more reason to call Gilles de Rais a disciple of 'Solomon' than to label him a Satanist. And indeed how could any man possibly be that, who refused from beginning to end to surrender his soul to the devil?

(b) *A Non-Conformist*

The rites said to have been worked for Madame de Montespan in the seventeenth century have nothing whatever to do with the school of 'Solomon'; but they demand attention here because of a strong family resemblance between the confessions extracted from accomplices on trial for their lives and those wrung from Gilles and his associates. Prelati and his colleagues were called in to obtain wealth, power and knowledge for their client from the powers of evil. If Madame de Montespan has not been maligned, she resorted to magical rites at intervals over a period of thirteen years in order to secure and keep the favour of Louis XIV, in the grip of a complex emotion in which passion and inordinate ambition were the chief ingredients. Goaded beyond endurance by those fierce desires, she gravitated inevitably like many others at Court into the orbit of Catherine La Voisin, a professional palmist and clairvoyant, who secretly also purveyed love-charms and death-charms to her clients. She was (as such gentry habitually are) a poisoner as well as a witch: and it was this branch of her activities which led to her arrest in 1679 and to the discovery of other and even darker crimes, implicating Madame de Montespan as well as many other great ladies and nobles of the Court.

The story as told by Funck-Brentano who examined the documents is an extremely circumstantial one, and I am about to recapitulate it without comment. It was in 1667 that Françoise Athenais first consulted La Voisin as to the best means to use in

order that she might gain the undivided affections of Louis XIV and estrange him from Louise de la Vallière and also from his wife. The ruthlessness towards her rivals is disquieting; otherwise one involuntarily thinks of the lover in Virgil's *Pharmaceutria*, weaving her spells in order to induce Daphnis to return. La Voisin put the rising favourite in touch with a priest called Mariette, who with an accomplice called Lesage performed an Amatory Mass destined to accomplish her desires. This first ceremony was a fairly innocuous affair; and, if the aim was not all it should be, the means hardly differed from any other Mass said to any particular intention. It took place in a house in Paris. Mariette, properly vested, sang the rite. Lesage invoked the Holy Ghost by the *Veni Creator*, and the Gospel was read over the head of the kneeling aspirant to royal favour and love, invocations were made, and the following incantation uttered:

... that the Queen may be barren, that the king leave her bed and table for me, that I obtain from him all that I ask for myself and my relatives; that my servants and domestics may be pleasing to him; that, beloved and respected by great nobles, I may be called to the councils of the king and know what passes there; and that, his affection being redoubled on what existed in the past, the king may leave La Vallière and look no more upon her; and that, the queen being repudiated, I may espouse the king.<sup>1</sup>

This ceremony was repeated in Saint-Germain (in the lodgings of Madame de Montespan's sister) and again in the church of Saint-Séverin. On this third and last occasion the hearts of two pigeons were consecrated in the names of Montespan and the king and laid upon the altar. The petition addressed to the Holy Ghost and the offering of doves (associated both with His worship and the cult of Venus) certainly strike an unsuitable note, being on a primitive level of childish superstition more appropriate to savages than to a scintillating Court star and a Catholic priest; on the other hand no profanation seems to have been intended and the language has none of that fierce intensity to be found in the love-charms of the Greek papyri. This first constraint by the Amatory Mass was apparently effective. Short of becoming the legitimate consort of Louis XIV, Madame de Montespan attained her other objects; but even as the reigning favourite, she never felt secure; and indeed,

<sup>1</sup> F. Funck-Brentano, *Le drame des poisons*, Paris, 1900, p. 159.

with a man temperamentally so fickle as the king, and surrounded on all sides by enemies and intrigues, her brilliant position was always precarious. Catherine's daughter Margaret later testified to the fact that when anything happened at Court to disturb the favourite's peace of mind, she would apply to La Voisin for a remedy. The wise-woman then consulted the priests, who said Masses, during the reading of which love-powders or rather love-pastes were placed under the chalice and blessed by the priest at the moment of the offertory. These concoctions were then given to Madame de Montespan, who contrived to have them administered to the king with his food, unknown to him. Among other even less agreeable ingredients, the love-powders contained cantharides, powder of desiccated moles and bats' blood. By such means, or so she believed, the favourite managed to retain her hold over the mind and heart of her dazzling but inconstant lover.

Up to the year 1672, when the birth of the third child by the royal mistress (the future Comte de Vexin) took place, these magical ceremonies and drugs, silly, disgusting, but relatively harmless, were the extent of the machinations against the king's mind of which the favourite was said to have been guilty. But in 1673 a serious crisis occurred, which demanded stronger enchantments, and the Abbé Guibourg was called in. This hideous and infamous old man of seventy prescribed the threefold repetition of an Amatory Mass compared with which those implemented by Mariette were mere innocent child's play. In the castle of Villebousin at Mesnil, about three weeks later in a hut, and finally, after another interval, in a house in Paris this atrocious ceremony was performed. On the first occasion Madame de Montespan, her lady-in-waiting and two or three others attended. The favourite disrobed, went into the chapel of the castle and lay down naked on the altar. Guibourg vested and entered; he set the chalice on the belly of Madame de Montespan and proceeded to say Mass. At the offering of the elements, a small child was produced and stabbed in the throat; the blood was caught in the chalice, flour was added and a wafer made. At the consecration either Guibourg or Montespan herself recited this invocation:

Astaroth, Asmodeus, Princes of affection, I conjure you to accept the sacrifice I present to you of this child for the things I ask of you: which are that the affection of the king and my lord the Dauphin for me may

be continued; and that, honoured by the princes and princesses of the court, nothing may be denied me of all that I shall ask the king, as well for my relatives as my servitors.<sup>1</sup>

When the ceremony was over Françoise Athenais took some of the blood and the consecrated wafer away with her, to insinuate as before into the king's food. It seemed to have the effect desired, and was probably responsible for another which was not intended; for the king was seriously ill that year, possibly owing to other ingredients in the powders than the blood of the slaughtered infants, whose immolation to Montespan's agonized ambition seems almost incredible.

In 1676 Guibourg was called in again. The first ceremony took place in La Voisin's house in precisely the same manner as before; and the second and third were also held in that place. But on these two last occasions the wise-woman acted as a substitute for the favourite, who either could not, or would not, or dared not be absent from Court more than once for so considerable a period. The reading of the Mass took two hours, from ten in the evening until midnight. It had altered in no respect since 1673; but the increasing degradation of Françoise Athenais was symbolized both by the place where the ceremony was enacted, and by the makeshift nature of the altar: a mattress laid on two stools. This proved to be too short; a chair was thereupon turned upside down and a pillow placed under the head of the royal mistress, whose legs dangled uncomfortably over the edge of the mattress. In this grotesque posture she lay: exquisite, fastidious, nobly born and gently nurtured; charming, graceful, witty and lovely; there she lay while the obscene ceremony proceeded and yet another innocent was slain. Little though one could hope from the humanity of this beautiful but baleful creature, one might nonetheless have expected that her nerves at least would have rebelled. And perhaps they did; perhaps that was the reason why she refused to attend the two subsequent Masses; and perhaps that had something to do with her decision, expressed in 1677, that 'where she could not govern she would destroy'. For her love for Louis lay dying; she had been through too much to keep his; ambition had now revealed itself in its true light as a lust for power; and revenge not hope began to

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, *op. cit.* pp. 171f.

dominate her mind. In 1679, maddened by Louis' passion for Louise de Fontanges, she took another step along the road she was treading, and ordered the Mortuary instead of the Amatory Mass. Although more evil in intention, this rite was far less objectionable from every other point of view. Guibourg simply recited the Mortuary Mass, uttering incantations against the king's life; no blood-sacrifice, and no revolting consecration were necessary. It was a simple and straightforward effort to kill at a distance, and it failed outright. As is customary in such cases, poison was then resorted to, for Montespan was absolutely determined to go to extremities, La Voisin hesitated at first, but then gave in. She and a confederate, La Trianon, were to account for the king by means of a poisoned petition; two male accomplices were to do a similar office by Louise de Fontanges with poisoned gloves and poisoned silks. La Voisin, evil and corrupt as she was, was extraordinarily conscientious professionally; there was nothing of the charlatan about her. Madame de Montespan would never have known if she had not acted as her substitute as a naked altar twice during the Amatory Mass. But we have her daughter's word for it that she scrupulously fulfilled her promise to do so. And now, with everything to fear and to lose if her attempt were discovered, she made her way to Saint-Germain on March 5, 1679 in order to place the petition in the king's own hands. As the poison was introduced into the inner envelope, it was of course imperative that he, and no other, should open it. She failed to get near enough on March 5, and therefore determined to make another attempt on March 13, little knowing that the investigations into her activities as a poisoner were actually proceeding at the time, and that her arrest was imminent. It took place on March 12. 'God has saved the king', she exclaimed. Madame de Montespan left the Court for Paris; but her complicity in the matter was not finally revealed, together with the whole story of her connexion with La Voisin, until October 1680, that is to say after the burning of the wise-woman in the preceding February. The latter had protected her client; but after her death the other witnesses and accomplices spoke more freely. On December 27, 1679, the king had instructed La Reynie to penetrate as far as possible into the abominable traffic in witchcraft and poison which was coming to light and to do strict justice in the matter without distinction of person, rank or sex. But in October 1680, he

suspended the sittings of the *Chambre Ardente* where the trials were being held, had certain evidence removed and burnt and ordered that the enquiry be conducted henceforth in the strictest privacy by La Reynie and one other person. He had heard of the ghastly and shattering revelations, according to which the one-time favourite, the mother of his children, of the Children of France, had been steeped for years in the vilest practices, and had finally attempted his own life; and he must have feared that his infidelities had driven her to commit those crimes.

One can only guess at the state of mind of the Sun-King, who looked upon himself as almost divine, when these accusations smote him; it is certain that he acted towards the culprit with super-human self-restraint, obviously fearing that if she appeared to be in disgrace, wiseacres might very well tumble to the reason for it. And it is possible, of course, that he was not completely convinced by testimony now pouring forth in a spate from disreputable and terrified witnesses, confessing under torture and hoping perhaps, by involving Madame de Montespan, to call a truce to their examinations. For the drama of the poisoners, as Funck-Brentano called it, may after all be more aptly entitled the legend of the poisoners, the title used by Lemoine in his interesting monograph, in which he attempts to prove that the whole series of accusations was engineered by Louvois in his perpetual warfare against Colbert. It is obviously too late in the day now to prove or disprove such theories. Only the trial of the accused herself, who was never given a hearing, could have settled the matter one way or the other. There is no confession to scrutinize, such as was made by Gilles de Rais, a dubious enough document since it was produced under the threat of torture, but still in certain portions bearing the stamp of truth. Madame de Montespan may, therefore, be given the benefit of the doubt, and it seems as if Louis XIV did so, once he had overcome the first shock and horror of the scandalous revelations that were being made.

At first the strain of keeping up appearances must have taxed him to the utmost; Madame de Sévigné noticed that, during this period, his visits to his former mistress's apartments rarely lasted more than a few moments; but by 1684 he was extremely attentive again, although her day as uncrowned queen of France was definitely over; and gradually the king saw less and less of her, subjected her



to slights and humiliations, and accepted her request to be allowed to retire from the Court in 1691 with unflattering alacrity. Yet surely, if he had been convinced that she had attempted his life, he would have found means to remove her from the Court a year or two at most after the discovery. Her extraordinary charm and the fascination of her conversation probably made him doubt again and yet again in the teeth of the evidence so painstakingly collected by La Reynie. For even to posterity it seems incredible, not perhaps that she should have tried to encompass his death, but that a woman of her refinement should ever have brought herself to lie naked on that mattress in La Voisin's den whilst the repulsive Abbé Guibourg mumbled incantations over her and butchered a child. Whether she had ever done this or not, the last sixteen years of her life after she had retired from Court were more and more devoted to acts of piety and charity. Humility, repentance and remorse increased as her death drew near, greatly dreaded until just before the end. Austerities and even macerations were her daily practice during the last years of her life; and she died in 1707 in the odour of sanctity as Gilles de Rais had also done during his harrowing execution.

The radiance and brilliance of her zenith recall the magnificence and glory of the Lord de Rais during the exploits of his youth. Dazzling to the eyes, they both pass across one's line of vision and disappear behind a lurid, lowering cloud of witchcraft, crime and magic; re-emerging as they are about to sink below the horizon, encompassed by glory still though the cloud is ominous and close. Taking their life-stories as they have been given above to be essentially true, it would seem that the saint and the sinner in both were capable of signal expression, Madame de Montespan developing saint-like qualities after she had retired from the world, and Gilles attaining to sainthood during and after his confession. He was fated to go down the dark path which finally led him to black magic; she embarked upon it impelled by passion and ambition. She was only partly the victim of her own temperament; the Court of Louis XIV and the king himself were largely responsible too. Gilles de Rais had no one to blame for the fearful predicament he was in but himself; the reckless extravagance he had indulged in was responsible for his spiritual downfall. He would have acted similarly anywhere; he would encompass his own ruin to-day. The

story of Madame de Montespan cannot be imagined outside the actual context in which it was placed.

The black magic they invoked to aid them was, however, of a different brand. Gilles worked the rites, or rather his wizards did so for him, which have been illustrated in the previous chapter. The aim was to constrain evil spirits to appear in person by the power of the Trinity and execute the wishes of the exorcist. The cross in Prelati's circle seems to vouch for this, as well as his claim to possess a book of the demons with the formulae of constraint. The anonymous sorcerer at Tiffauges seemed to be practising magic of a darker hue to judge by his prohibition to make the sign of the cross; but there is nothing else by which to identify the rite he was conducting; and the infant Prelati demanded in the name of Barron was probably but one more revolting item in a lengthy list of invented crimes.

The rites presumably in vogue in Paris under Louis XIV, whether performed for Madame de Montespan or not, are of a totally different character. No spirits were ever summoned to appear and no manifestations were expected, although magical miracles were the object of the ceremonies. Mariette's Amatory Mass was on about the same spiritual level as the *Constitution of Honorius*, a preposterous and unattractive effort to use the rites of the Church for unworthy ends. Guibourg's version was infinitely worse; disgusting, indecent and involving human sacrifice. It was not, however, properly speaking the Black Mass. In the latter Satan is adored by ceremonies which are an intentionally blasphemous parody of the High Mass, full of shocking obscenities, entailing a blood-sacrifice and culminating in the appearance of the arch-fiend in human or bestial shape. This at least is the oral tradition on the subject; the texts are naturally unprocurable and reliable witnesses as hard to discover as the unicorn. In Guibourg's Amatory Mass the appalling sacrifice to Astaroth and Asmodeus was made in the framework of the orthodox Mass, with no apparent intent to parody it, but to make use of it for its presumed miraculous power. It was in the sphere of influence dominated by the Black Mass, and therefore very near to Satanism. If the sacrifice implied worship, then the rite was in sober truth satanic. It seems, however, to have been used merely as a lure or a bribe as in most ritual texts, in which case it stopped short this side of diabolatry.

Yet one would need far more trustworthy witnesses than the departed La Voisin's terrified accomplices before one could accept their testimony about these various Masses at their face-value. All one can safely say is that, as in the witchcraft trials, the accused persons were conversant with these dark and sinister imaginings, and that the cross-examiners were familiar with them too. That in itself is a sufficiently serious symptom of minds diseased.

(c) *The Nigromant of Norcia*

It is a relief to return from this excursion into much darker regions than those surveyed in the texts of ritual magic which have seen the light of day and to re-enter the world of Solomonic endeavour. And the relief is all the greater because this leads one backwards in time to the days of the Italian Renaissance, beside which the twentieth century seems so tame. For in spite of underground movements, resistance movements, partisans and commandos, humanity has not recaptured the lost art of living dangerously which was brought to such a pitch of perfection by the men who stalked the streets of Florence and Rome in the sixteenth century. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the art has now become a science; that the Hotspur of yesterday has become the Commando of to-day, groomed, conditioned and trained to perform deeds of daring and violence with a utilitarian end in view; whereas the bravos of the Renaissance enacted them from purer motives: because they gave savour and significance to life, an intoxicating feeling of triumph and mastery and provided an outlet for the superabundant energy that was storming through their veins. This mixture of savagery and glory, of wild-beast ferocity and extravagant beauty, which characterizes the period as a whole, is concentrated in the pages of Cellini's autobiography on the hero, whose passion for his art was as fierce and sometimes as devastating as his terrible wrath, and equally tenacious. Arrogant, vainglorious, swashbuckling and vindictive, this amazing creature was also sensitive and impressionable to the last degree; and he lived so vividly and vitally that what seem to us wild exaggerations were probably understatements of the experiences he underwent, granting that his reactions to the events which befell him or which he provoked were an integral part of the whole. As one goes hurtling with him at breakneck speed through

his breathless and often incoherent narrative pictures flash by that sear themselves on one's brain and will never be erased as long as memory endures.

The death of Cellini's young soldier brother Cecchino, slain in a brawl, is one of such unforgettable incidents. The spirit of the Renaissance itself seems to be uttering the words with which he refused the sacrament during a lucid interval in his ravings, because he knew that with his mind thus affected he was in no fit state to receive it:

You would have done well to confess me before. Now it is impossible for me to receive this divine Sacrament in this broken vessel. Be content that I taste it only with the divine gift of my eyes through which it will be received into my immortal soul, which alone asks of it mercy and pardon.<sup>1</sup>

And he began to rave again as soon as the sacrament was carried away. This delicacy of feeling and spiritual perception co-existing in the same mind with vengefulness and brutality has the hall-mark of the Italian Renaissance upon it. The harmony between such diametrically opposite qualities achieved by the dissolute young soldier seems no longer to be within the scope of humanity, more one-sided to-day and by so much the more meagre. But Benvenuto himself, since he was an artist, gave even more striking proofs of the faculty of living intensely and with the whole of his personality on different and seemingly hostile planes. Leaving to one side his homicides and other deeds of cruelty and violence, the description of the casting of his *Perseus* reveals his creative force in a state of such raging activity as to seem as dangerous and potentially as destructive as some fearful elemental cataclysm. And the resistance of his wildly struggling spirit against death during the nearly fatal illness of 1535 took on an aspect which revealed at one and the same time his passion of fear and his refusal to surrender to the baneful force attacking him:

Nature in me was utterly debilitated and undone; I had not strength enough to fetch my breath back if it left me; and yet my brain remained as clear and strong as it was when I was not ill. Nevertheless, whilst thus

<sup>1</sup> Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita scritta da lui medesimo*, ed. Fabietti, Milan, n.d. p. 115. I have based my translations throughout on those of Symonds and Cust.

conscious, there came to find me in my bed a terrible old man who wanted to drag me by force into a very large boat of his. This caused me to call out to my Felice to come near and chase that malignant old man away... Messer Ludovico asked me what it was that I seemed to see and what was the appearance of the man. Whilst I was portraying him accurately in words, this old man took me by an arm, and forcibly drew me towards himself, wherefore I cried out that they should help me, because he wanted to throw me beneath the decks of his terrifying boat. When I had uttered this last word, there came upon me a very great swoon, and it seemed to me that he threw me into that boat... Felice wanted to send for Master Francesco, but I told him not to send for him, and that he must come close to me, for that old man was about to go, and was afraid of him. When Felice came near me, I took hold of him, and it seemed to me that that old man, infuriated, went away.<sup>1</sup>

The bystanders were not slow to attribute Cellini's vision to Dante's description of Charon in the *Inferno*:

And lo! toward us in a bark  
Comes on an old man, hoary white with eld.<sup>2</sup>

It certainly derived from that source; and reveals in what a living way Cellini had experienced the poem. As far as my knowledge goes no dying man (and Cellini was at death's door) has ever expressed the experience in such a terribly real and yet visionary way as the unregenerate goldsmith when he called out to his friends to help him because the old man was dragging him away to his terrifying boat.

For there was a strong visionary element in Cellini's nature, just as there was a strong sensual element; and the mystical element came to the fore again during his fearful experiences in the dungeons of the Castle of San Angelo. Imprisoned on a false accusation of having stolen crown jewels whilst melting down their settings for Pope Clement VII, he was at first treated leniently by Pope Paul III, and would probably have been released but for the implacable enmity towards the artist of Paul's bastard son Pier Luigo, Duke of Parma. Wearying of his confinement, Cellini managed to escape, but was delivered up again to the Pope and flung with his leg broken into solitary confinement in a noisome underground cell, where, just short of absolute starvation, he was

<sup>1</sup> Cellini, *op. cit.* pp. 179ff.

<sup>2</sup> Dante, *Inferno*, Canto III, ll. 82-4, tr. Carey.

left to rot to death. The extraordinary soundness and toughness of his constitution which survived that treatment unimpaired has had parallels in the past and in our own day; it was supplemented by a spiritual resilience not so easy to find. Brought to the verge of despair, he attempted suicide; the attempt was abortive, he believed owing to miraculous intervention; certainly from then onwards religion and his own predisposition to see visions came to his aid. The inspiration this time came from the Bible and from the goldsmith's craft. Among other apparitions, he was granted the sight of the sun in blinding splendour on All Souls' Day. Gazing into the heart of the radiance, he saw an image first of Christ on the Cross and then of the Madonna and Child form themselves before his eyes from the molten gold of that imaginary sun; and this experience is described with the same attention to detail and vivid realism with which he depicted all the other events of his crowded and diversified existence.

Such was the man who has left behind him one of the most circumstantial accounts of an operation in magic which history has to show, the famous invocations in the Coliseum which took place about 1533 or 1534, and in which the long bow of fiction has generally been suspected. Sharing as I do Symonds' moral certainty of Cellini's veracity, I am convinced that everything took place exactly as he describes it; and the only question left in doubt is the genuineness of the manifestations, in other words of the magician. This man, whom Cellini got to know in Rome through *diverse stravaganze* or curious chances, was a Sicilian priest, very learned in Latin and Greek and of great intellectual attainments. The subject of nigromancy happening to crop up in conversation between the two men, Cellini expressed the ardent desire he had always felt to hear or see something of the Art. The Sicilian rejoined that the man who wished to embark on an enterprise of that nature must be possessed of a firm and unshakeable spirit, which almost sounds like a quotation from the *Key of Solomon*. Benvenuto, who once said that he did not know the colour of fear, assured the other that he lacked neither courage nor confidence; and it was thereupon agreed that the venture should be attempted. On a certain evening the Sicilian made his preparations and told Cellini to bring a companion with him, or not more than two. He chose an intimate friend called Vincentio Romoli, and the magician brought with him

a man from Pistoia who had some knowledge of the Art. There were, therefore, four all told on that occasion. Arrived at the Coliseum, the priest put on wizard's robes and set himself to draw the circles on the ground with the finest ceremonies imaginable, Cellini declared enthusiastically but without entering into details. Besides his robe, his wand and his books, materials for lighting a fire had been carried to the spot, sweet perfumes and others of evil odour (a manuscript note in the margin says *assafoetida*) and a pentacle. The magician now made an opening into one of the circles and led his three associates into it, one after another, taking them by the hand. He will then certainly have closed the circle, although Cellini does not say so. The latter and Romoli were set to tend the fire and feed it with perfumes; the pentacle was entrusted to the man from Pistoia. The magician then betook himself to the incantations which lasted about an hour and a half, at the end of which time 'several legions appeared, so that the Coliseum was quite full'. Cellini did not state that he saw these legions of fiends; and indeed the next sentence makes it almost certain that he did not; for he went on to say that, when the exorcist became aware of their presence in such great quantity, he turned to Cellini, who was occupied with the perfumes, and said: 'Benvenuto, ask them something.' That young man, who was, or imagined that he was, deeply in love with a Sicilian girl called Angelica, whom he had lost from sight, responded promptly that they should bring him to her side. No answer of any kind was made on that night; nevertheless, far from being disappointed, Cellini stated that the whole performance gave him the greatest possible satisfaction as a specimen of the Art, although it seems to have been rather a tame affair.

The magician for his part declared that the operation must be performed again, and that then the spirits would certainly grant all that Cellini might ask of them. He stipulated, however, for the presence of a little virgin lad, and Cellini, nothing loth, brought his young apprentice with him, a boy of twelve called Cenci, as we learn later: 'my small servant, who was exceptionally clever, bold, and very handsome in appearance.'<sup>1</sup> Romoli was also pressed into the service again, and seems to have raised no objections, which supports my impression that on the first occasion nothing of any note occurred. In addition Cellini brought another intimate

<sup>1</sup> Cellini, op. cit. p. 177.

companion called Agnolino Gaddi; but the man from Pistoia was not there. There were therefore five present on the second occasion, making an uneven number as against the even number for the first operation. Unless Cenci did not 'count', this carelessness about odd or even is unusual; sometimes the one and sometimes the other is advocated in the texts according to the divergent views of the writers; but it is never a matter of indifference.

The preparations and the ceremonies during the drawing of the circle were much more 'wondrous' this time than last. Romoli and Gaddi were told off to attend to the fire and the perfumes; Cellini was entrusted with the pentacle which he was bidden to point in whatever direction the magician might indicate. Meanwhile he held it over Cenci's head, possibly with the benevolent idea of protecting him specially. The priest, clad as before in his wizard's gown, now proceeded to utter very terrible invocations

... calling by name a great quantity of those demons, chiefs of those legions, whom he commanded by the virtue and power of God, increate, living and eternal in the Hebrew tongue, and also in Greek and Latin.<sup>1</sup>

As the demons were summoned by name, it looks as if a text on the lines of the *Lemegeton* were being used, and it is even possible that the traditional seventy-two, all of them chiefs of legions, were invoked in this terrible conjuration-scene. It had a remarkable result; for in a short space of time the whole Coliseum was thronged with spirits a hundred times more densely than on the previous occasion. Acting on the magician's advice, Cellini made the same request as before, and the exorcist, turning to him, exclaimed:

'Do you hear what they have told you? That within the space of a month you will be where she is.'<sup>2</sup>

He then began to show some trepidation, adjuring Cellini to stand firm and support him, for there were a thousand times more fiends than he had summoned, and all of them of the most dangerous kind. Moreover, since they had granted the request, it would be necessary to treat them civilly and dismiss them patiently. This tallies with instructions given in the ritual texts, where it is generally expressly stated that when the spirit or spirits have agreed to perform the magician's commands they must be courteously addressed and dismissed in the same way. Sometimes, however,

<sup>1</sup> Cellini, op. cit. p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



bluster was used in order to get rid of them; and the difficulty of doing so has always been recognized in the Art. Meanwhile, if the magician was rather shaken by the predicament he was in, poor little Cenci was absolutely terrified, crying out that he saw a million of the fiercest men menacing them, and that four armed giants were making to enter the circle. This would have spelt disaster indeed, and the trembling magician betook himself to his formulae of dismissal, uttering them in gentle and suave tones to the best of his ability. The panic was gaining on them all by now. Romoli, shaking like an aspen-leaf, still attended manfully to the perfumes; Cellini, really frightened and giving himself up for dead because of the fear displayed by the magician, nevertheless tried to encourage the others, in particular little Cenci who, with his head between his knees, was moaning that he wished to die in that posture, and that they were all dead men. Benvenuto's answer is highly informative; for he told the terrified lad first that the devils were all under the power of the group in the circle, and secondly that what he saw was only smoke and shadows. The smoke from the perfumed fire was probably rolling out in clouds, favourable to fearful hallucinations or to materializations, according to one's point of view. However that may be, it seems certain that Cellini saw only the smoke and shadows dancing in the Coliseum; for whenever he did see visions he always said so emphatically, and on this occasion explicitly attributed the fear he felt to the terror manifested by the magician. His words to Cenci, however, did not have the effect intended; for, raising his eyes to confirm his master's opinion, he cried out that the whole Coliseum was on fire and that the flames were coming towards them. Then he covered his face with his hands, repeated that he was as good as dead, and refused to see anything more. This shook the magician to the core, and he availed himself of an expedient that was evidently a last resort. Imploring Cellini to stand firm, he told him to see to it that his assistants put *assafoetida* on the fire. This unpleasing substance was generally used to constrain the spirits to appear, by burning their names and characters on a fire fed with this stinking substance, and thus as it were smoking them out. Although never to my knowledge advocated in the rituals as a means of forcing them to depart, it is clear that it would be a logical method to employ, and the magician had recourse to these foul

means, the fair means of persuasion having failed. Romoli and Gaddi, however, were by now so petrified with fear as to be almost incapable of obeying, especially the latter, whose eyes were starting out of his head. Cellini told him rather sharply to pull himself together and help with the *assafoetida*, and the wretched youth moving to obey contributed involuntarily and profusely to the evil odour. This broke the spell under which they were all labouring. Cellini even laughed a little; Cenci opened his eyes and reported that the spirits were beginning to depart in great fury. Nevertheless the conjurers stayed in the circle until they heard the bells ringing for matins, when Cenci told them that only a few spirits remained, and that they were at a distance. The magician thereupon concluded his ceremonies, disrobed and packed up a great sack of books he had brought with him. Then clinging together, they left the circle (the little boy holding on to Cellini's coat and the magician's cloak), and made their way home. According to Cenci two of the spirits who had been in the Coliseum accompanied them back, sometimes gambolling along the roofs and sometimes in the road. The magician declared that in all the times he had entered magic circles, nothing as remarkable as this had ever occurred, and that Benvenuto ought to help him consecrate a book which he possessed and by means of which they could force the demons to discover to them the treasures of the earth. That would be better than bothering his head with love, mere folly, which never led to anything. The book was evidently a *Liber Spirituum* which the fiends had not yet been invoked to sign, a ceremony for which Cellini struck the priest as particularly suitable, because of the intrepidity he had shown, and probably also because the magician believed that he was the cause of the spirits manifesting in such abundance that night. He brushed the goldsmith's lack of Latin aside as of no importance; it was his courage that was needed. On this note they parted, to dream of devils all night.

It will have been noticed that in this lively and (I believe) veracious account of the happenings in the Coliseum, the only partaker of the mysteries of magic who testified to seeing anything was Cenci. The magician spoke as if he were aware of the presence of the spirits, and said that he heard them speak; but otherwise he, like everyone else on the second night, relied chiefly on the reports made by Cenci, and seemed to be thoroughly frightened by them.

Romoli and Gaddi were mute throughout, and Cellini certainly gives the impression of having heard nothing with his own ears and having seen nothing but shadows and smoke. In these circumstances, what are we to think of the good faith of the magician? It was he who insisted on a virgin little boy for the second experiment, the first having fallen rather flat, and he may have suborned Cenci to play a part. (There is no need to drag in a hypothetical magic lantern as Brewster so absurdly did.) But if he did suborn Cenci, what was his object? To impress Cellini and gain his help in consecrating the Book of Spirits? He must therefore have believed in the Book, and therefore in magic, and therefore presumably in his own performances and powers. It seems to me clear that he did; and like many another was hallucinated by his own invocations and the incense; but never quite to the point to which he attained during the second night in the Coliseum. He attributed this to Cellini. It is more likely I think that it was owing to the presence of the highly impressionable lad; and that the tradition of associating children with magical experiments probably arose because results such as the above are apt to be obtained when they are there. Visual imagination is much more vivid in childhood than in later years. And it was from Cenci that the panic spread throughout the circle; the magician himself was obviously affected by the terror-stricken boyish voice.

Leaving the question of deliberate fraud in the Coliseum open, it would certainly seem that the Sicilian priest was in earnest about the consecration of the Book. He returned to the subject the following day, and kept on coming back to it. He positively badgered Cellini about it. His plan was to retire with the artist to the mountains of Norcia and devote a month to the magical undertaking. He gave as his reason for the choice of that particular district that the peasants inhabiting it were knowledgeable in the Art and would render assistance if necessary. He was not speaking idly, for there was a cave in those mountains said to be the abode of sibyls and much frequented by wizards for ceremonial purposes. The demonologist Delrio (1551-1608) gave a circumstantial account taken from Crespet of happenings there in his *Disquisition of Magic* published towards the end of the sixteenth century. A nest of sorcerers arrested in Nantes and brought to trial were found to be in possession of books of magic consecrated by the sibyls of Norcia.

PLATE IV



Physical plane

Astral plane  
A magical evocation



Amongst less credible revelations, they owned to having begged these priestesses to perform that office, so that the evil spirits might be obedient in all things in accordance with the invocations contained in the books. The sibyls' sign or seal was believed to increase the power of the conjurations, evidently a substitute for the signature of the fiends themselves, probably resorted to because the spirits invoked never deigned to appear. The boons expected from them were on recognizably Solomonic lines: the manifestation of the spirit in comely human guise without danger to the exorcist and without the necessity of a magic circle, a condition often made after the first raising of any demon, and after the *Liber Spirituum* had been duly sworn to. The sibyls were in addition to guarantee their clients safety from the persecution and punishment of the judges and of their enemies, to secure them favour at Court and luck at cards. The sorcerers for their part promised to honour the benefactors in all eternity as their rulers, and all the days of their lives to offer them a soul on every anniversary of the consecration of the books, either by sacrifice or by initiation of the victim into their mysteries. Ceremonial magic and the witches' sabbath merge into each other in this vow; but it did not achieve its object in the case of the luckless sorcerers of Nantes, all of whom paid the supreme penalty for their misdeeds in Paris.

The evil reputation of Norcia as the haunt of witches, demons and shades of the night shows that Cellini's magician was acting in good faith when he tried to persuade the goldsmith to accompany him to that spot; no better one could have been chosen for the action in hand, in spite of the fact that the great Saint Benedict had been born there; and indeed so strange is the magical mind that this may have started the rumours of diabolical forces at work in those regions, or at least have increased them. On the other hand one of the Sicilian priest's instructors in magic had encountered great difficulties before finally succeeding in consecrating his *Liber Spirituum* in the village of Bada di Farfa, and this was attributed (though not by the magician) to the great Benedictine Abbey of Santa Maria in the vicinity.

Whether Norcia was witch-infested or not, it seems fairly clear that the nigromancer of the Coliseum, if he deluded Cellini, also deluded himself, and was an honest man, if that is the right word to use about any one who is anxious to consecrate a Book of the

Spirits in order to come by treasure. He seems further to have been endowed with a certain gift of prophecy. He kept on bothering Cellini about the Book; and the latter kept on bothering him about Angelica, for time was slipping by, and there was still no sight or sound of her. On this subject the magician was confident. Cellini would meet her before the month was up, for when the spirits promised anything in the fashion they had done that night, they always kept their word. But he foresaw danger for the artist, an imminent peril which could only be averted if he acted contrary to his natural disposition. Why not come with him to Norcia and avoid it altogether? Benvenuto was sorely tempted; indeed he was within an ace of joining forces with the priest, and was only kept back from doing so by his art, the ruling passion of his life. He wanted first to finish a medal for Pope Clement VII which he was designing in competition with another master of the craft, Giovanni Bernardi; and such was his absorption in this task that magic ceased to allure and Angelica was forgotten. There then occurred an incident such as the magician had prophesied. Cellini, as so often, found himself involved in one of those brawls in which words developed into blows, and blows into murderous onslaughts. He remembered what the magician had said, he acted contrary to his disposition and managed partly to control his ungovernable temper. The affray stopped at blows; had it gone further Cellini's life would certainly have been imperilled; for one of those many malignant foes who beset his path was waiting for an opportunity of this sort to have him arrested and executed out of hand.

By an even stranger set of coincidences Cellini actually met his Sicilian Angelica in Naples on the very last day of the month which the spirits had set as the term. He spent a rapturous night with her and was all for marrying her next morning and taking her away with him. But the rapacity of her mother brought the scheme to naught; Cellini rather heartlessly rode away, pondering perhaps the saying of the Sicilian magician, that love is mere foolery and never leads anywhere.

It would be impossible to conclude this relation of the magical operation performed in the Coliseum without a reference to a later magician, Cagliostro, who spent the months of his examination by the Inquisition in the castle of San Angelo as Cellini had done more than two hundred years before. But Cagliostro was only

released from San Angelo to be confined in the far worse fortress of San Leo where after years of agony he expired; and as far as one can tell in all his ravings the consolation of visions such as Cellini's was denied him. Of the final fate of the magician who produced such legions of spirits in the Coliseum nothing is known. But his ghost haunts the Second Part of Goethe's *Faust* as the Necromant of Norcia. For Goethe translated Cellini's autobiography, and the name came back to him at a very appropriate moment in the fourth act. The *Lemegeton*, Cagliostro, Goethe and *Faust* are all connected by the invisible but inseverable thread of magic with a great artist-craftsman of the Renaissance in Italy who did not know the colour of fear and went rushing into a magic circle where angels fear to tread.

(d) *The Sieur de Seingalt*

The story of Madame de Montespan, whether true or not, typifies the state of magic in the seventeenth century, by which time the prevalent notions about it were of a highly sensational and sophisticated kind, much impregnated with the belief in Satanism and dominated by epidemics of supposed diabolical possession. The kind of Masses associated with Mariette and Guibourg were counter-balanced as it were by ceremonies of exorcism and exhibitions of convulsionism, distressing and revolting scenes over which there is no temptation to linger and which are not even remotely connected with the school of Solomonic magic. The eighteenth century, through the instrumentality of the various Continental secret societies, did something to disengage the practising magician from the welter of hysterical monks, nuns and priests which had threatened to engulf him, by restoring to occult ceremonies their one-time glamour and prestige. Cagliostro is the most famous of the practitioners of magic who owed their lore to the ritual of the Lodges; but Giacomo Casanova (1725-98) also contributed very largely to the dissemination of contemporary occultism and to the revival of traditional beliefs.

This extraordinary adventurer was both a product and a portent of the times which seemed to be fleeting through a mad masked ball, in reality a dance of death. The glittering life at the many and various European courts, the perpetual pursuit of pleasure, the extreme



luxury, the hectic gambling, the feverish eroticism, the passion for the inexplicable and the impenetrable, for anything striking and new were fated to breed a race of adventurers to satisfy these many urgent desires. The prizes to be gained by freebootery and the predisposition to gain them were almost equally matched in the person of Casanova, who rose to heights in his profession no other adventurer has scaled. Sharpers and swindlers galore, a host of parasites on the organism of society, already crumbling beneath its luxuriant and magnificent exterior, were sucking its life away; but Casanova at least added something individual to the growth he was battenning on, so that one can hardly imagine it without him now. Gifted with an intellect of no mean order which he could turn to any use, he could have adorned almost any profession and secured lucrative appointments in them all. But he was a born adventurer, far less interested in the rewards of his exploits than in the exploits themselves; ready at any time to throw away substantial advantages for some magnificent mirage; not to mention his love-affairs which were perpetually putting spokes in his wildly whirring wheels. He was enamoured of life and indifferent at the best to the means to sustain life; at the worst he positively disliked them, because they hindered him from living in his own fashion, freely, irresponsibly, fully. How was that possible with one's nose to the grindstone, or one's shoulder to the wheel? He might have come to heel and toed the line, if the society into which he was born had been differently constituted; as it was he was able to cut a dash and a figure in the world, and leave the world's work to others. He was not unlike a human drone; big, fine, virile, never venturing forth on flights to procure honey for the hive, but merely to enjoy himself, to disport himself and to fertilize the queen bees. In this at least he was extremely energetic, although no self-respecting hive would harbour him for long; so that he became a zoological anomaly, a nomadic drone. Added to his adventurous disposition and his amorous propensities was an instinctive desire to make fun and to make fools, not to say dupes, of those around him; he took a disinterested delight in this, quite apart from the pecuniary advantages he reaped from it. It was a thoroughly Casanovian manner of expressing his intellectual superiority and played no small part in the composition of his *Memoirs*, in which he set out to do for posterity what he had done for his contemporaries.

This at least seems to have been often the case when he regaled his future readers about magic. It played no small part in his life, and he constantly recurs to it; but whilst assuring posterity that it was all a game of bluff, there is a good deal of double bluff on the subject in the *Memoirs*. Vanity was partly responsible, I feel sure; but whoever starts meddling with magic is liable to end by deluding himself in the attempt to impose upon others. There is a tradition in the Halls that real magic occasionally intervenes in the conjuring turns, much disconcerting the artists and upsetting the programme and the timing. Casanova hinted more than once that the same thing happened to him; and it is possible that by the time he came to write down the story of his life he genuinely believed it. Difficult though it is to pin down this elusive writer to the literal truth (and it is too much like impaling a butterfly to be an attractive task), it seems highly likely that he was far less sceptical about magic than he wished posterity to imagine. Beneath his boasted incredulity there lurks the discernible desire to prove that there was something in it after all; and that Casanova himself, that monument of enlightenment, befooling the gullible and acting the charlatan, was nevertheless gifted with powers of which he was unconscious but which the intelligent reader could not fail to detect. In such passages he set out, I think, to dupe posterity and finished by convincing himself. But where the truth may lie in these curious mystifications is not for me to say.

Practical magic, whether spurious or genuine, played a great part in this adventurer's career; so much can be said with certainty about the history of a life in which barefaced inventions read like sober facts, and hard facts like the wildest fictions. Moreover, Casanova was at some pains to emphasize the occult aspect of his existence. Whether his chronic nose-bleeding and his apparent mental deficiency were cured in childhood by a wise-woman, we shall never really know; but it is at least more than likely that his grandmother should have consulted the local witch on the subject; and that the child, whose imagination later amounted to genius, should have seen in the following night a radiant fairy-godmother come down the chimney to complete the cure. Cellini was fond of saying that God helps those who help themselves; and Giacomo too was an adherent of that school of thought. Before he was twenty-one he had already constructed his 'kabbala' as he called

it; to which he was to owe a very great deal of his success in the world. If not a genuine magician, he was certainly a wizard with figures, and a lightning calculator. The 'kabbala' he invented was an ingenious kind of cipher or cryptogram which he used for foretelling the future. He would write down the question, transpose the letters or words into figures, make a pyramid of these, extract letters from the numbers thus arranged, and in this way obtain the answer. In much the same manner the Kabbalists of old had extracted the magical names for God. But they had all the time they wanted at their disposal. Casanova's mind must have worked as fast as light to get the figures into the right order for the answer he meant to extract. His ingenuity and quick-wittedness were also evident in the oracular vagueness of the responses; but when he managed to pick up inside information, the oracle would dazzle inquirers by its knowledge and wisdom. And it was thus that he conquered the heart of the wealthy, guileless and lovable Signor Bragadin. The latter was in any case strongly predisposed in his favour, for Casanova had saved his life. Always observant, always alert, with an absolute flair for anything that might turn to his advantage, Casanova had seen the senator drop a letter from his pocket in the small hours of a night in April 1746, just as he was about to step into his gondola. The young man had retrieved the missive, and been offered a seat in the boat as a reward. What was his horror however when Bragadin was suddenly seized by an apoplectic fit! Luckily realizing at once what was wrong, he made the gondoliers tie up and got hold of a barber-surgeon to bleed the unconscious senator; he then conveyed him home, sent for a doctor and refused to leave his bedside all that day and the following night, saying that the sick man would die if he did so. And sure enough, the mercury-plaster ordered by the physician was so strong that it would have killed the patient had Casanova not snatched it off in the nick of time, whilst the senator's two intimate friends, Dandolo and Barbaro, stood impotently by. One can well understand how all three came to the conclusion that this extraordinary young man was possessed of supernatural powers. Far from discouraging this surmise, Casanova fed the flames by displaying his prowess with the 'kabbala'. He pretended to make light of it; but craftily told the attentive threesome that it was in obedience to this oracle that he had left a wedding-feast on the

night of Bragadin's illness exactly when he did. He also informed them that he had been taught the science by a hermit; and when his new friends eagerly asked how long it would take him to teach them he answered airily:

In a very short time, gentlemen, and I will do so with the greatest pleasure; for, although the hermit told me that I would die a sudden death three days after communicating the secret to anyone else, I simply don't believe him.<sup>1</sup>

Bragadin and his cronies did, however; and took the less hazardous step of domesticating the oracular Kabbalist. Indeed Bragadin remained until the day of his death a devoted and generous friend to Casanova and the kindest of bankers; the adventurer need never fear an empty purse as long as Bragadin was there to fill it. He repaid him by a warm and almost filial affection which, however, never interfered with his complete liberty of action. In fact, Bragadin's friendship did a great deal to make that much-prized freedom possible by contributing the necessary funds. And this important connexion was made early on in Casanova's career owing to the supposedly magic qualities of his ingenious 'kabbala'.

But if magic lifted him up on this occasion, it cast him down on another; for it seems to have been chiefly responsible for the growing alarm and distrust with which the Venetian Inquisition followed the rakish and raffish footsteps of Casanova through the streets of his native town. It was also known or guessed that he had been initiated into Freemasonry, an event which occurred in Lyons in 1750; Casanova had become a Companion of the order somewhat later in Paris and later still had been elevated to the rank of Master. Suspicions of his connexion with the hated and dreaded society; his irregular and far from blameless life; his impious expressions on the subject of religion, in particular an atheistical poem read out loud in a tavern; all this was quite enough to justify closer investigation. The police-spy Manuzzi was set to watch him, and insinuated himself into Casanova's lodgings pretending he had diamonds to sell on credit, but really hoping to get hold of the blasphemous verses.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, *Mémoires*, Paris, n.d. 6 vols., ed. Flammarion, I, p. 468.

Looking at several books which I had scattered about, he paused when he came to some manuscripts dealing with magic. Idiotically amused at his surprise, I showed him those which teach one the art of making the acquaintance of all the elemental spirits. I beg my readers to believe that I had not the least faith in all these grimoires; but I possessed them, and I amused myself with them as one does with the thousand follies which have issued from hollow brains.<sup>1</sup>

Poor Casanova, proudly displaying his Black Books, feeling himself to be the very devil of a fellow no doubt, and as innocent as the babe unborn that he was making a confidant of an emissary of the Inquisition, 'that species of ferocious beast into whose clutches it is better not to fall'.<sup>2</sup> Manuzzi borrowed them on the pretext of getting a purchaser and showed them to the Grand Inquisitor, at the same time reporting that Casanova possessed a leather apron and other Masonic insignia. This was enough. The books were returned so as to play the part of *corpus delicti* when the arrest was made on July 24, 1755. Casanova never heard his sentence, nor knew why or for how long he had been condemned. Research has unearthed the facts:

It having come to the cognisance of the Tribunal that Giacomo Casanova had committed many grave crimes, particularly public outrages against our holy religion, their Excellencies had him arrested and imprisoned under the Leads, to which he is condemned for five years.<sup>3</sup>

The world knows the tale of those frightful fifteen months under the Leads and of the daredevil escape. Casanova would never tell that story unless he were given two hours to do justice to it, and I must follow his example by referring to the account to be found in the *Memoirs*. Not even Monte Christo showed more ingenuity, perseverance, nerve and courage than this self-confessed seducer of women and deluder of men. Considering the nature of his incarceration and its effect upon his subsequent life: his exile from Venice which lasted until 1774 and was only revoked on the humiliating terms that he should become a paid spy on that 'ferocious beast' the Inquisition; considering too how much his fabulous escape contributed to his flamboyant reputation, it will

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, op. cit. III, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> A. Compigny des Bordes, *Casanova et la Marquise d'Urfé*, Paris, 1922, p. 17.

certainly be allowed that magic was a factor of supreme importance in shaping Casanova's life. What, however, adds particular interest to this general statement is the list of the five bound manuscripts of magic which (failing the atheistical poem) provided the material evidence for his arrest and imprisonment. These were the *Key of Solomon*, *Zecor-ben*, *Picatrix*, *Instructions concerning planetary hours*, and a book of conjurations for demons of every class. One cannot altogether suppress one's triumph at finding the great magical classic figuring so prominently on this dramatic occasion; its presence has been a matter of deduction in the case of Gilles de Rais and Cellini; but there it actually was among Casanova's possessions. The question as to whether he had ever used it seriously is one which would have made him shout with laughter; but as we shall see he almost certainly had it by him during one of his conjuration-scenes. *Picatrix*, according to Mathers and other authorities, is an Italian edition of the *Clavicle*, strongly impregnated with black elements; the instructions concerning the planetary hours may have been the *Heptameron* of Peter of Abano (or Apono); and though there is nothing by which one can identify the anonymous book of conjurations it sounds extremely like the *Lemegeton*. *Zecor-ben*, or to give it its more usual name of *Zekerboni*, was a book of ill repute indeed, for it was attributed to the notorious Peter Mora, alchemist, black magician, said to be a Satanist and poisoner who lived in Milan early in the seventeenth century, and was burnt there after having confessed (under torture) to those crimes and also to the worse one of having been responsible, with his associates, of spreading the plague. One would therefore deduce that the book of rituals ascribed to him must have been black indeed. I have not been able to see it; but to go by the following description by Summers, it was certainly not a Satanist production, however black in other respects:

*Zekerboni* has many mysterious and cabbalistic designs, especially a drawing of the 'Great Pentacle', where four intersecting circles enclose a reticulation of curious patterning, scattered and starred with Hebrew and Greek letters and punctuated by paraph and points in endless entanglement. It was not intended that the manual should easily be understood. Considerable stress throughout is laid upon the dignity and office of the Master (i.e. Mora himself), and the major conjuration is performed by the Master, attended by several disciples, of whom one holds

the lanthorn by the light of which the Master reads from his parchment; another has paper, quill, and inkhorn, so that the answers given by the demon may be noted down; and a third carries the naked sword, whose blade is engraven with unlawful names and rune-staves not a few. It is the Master who kindles the charcoal for the suffumigations, who with lighted taper in one hand and mystic rod of might raised high in the other, when all have taken their places securely within the circle, begins to intone the conjurations of devils, for such, in spite of every disguise and deceit, the spirits truly are. To mask the horrid blasphemy of this business, nay, to add to their impieties, the warlocks call upon the Thrice Holy Name of God, and further the fiend is bidden manifest himself 'in a pleasing form and appearance, without any horror of shape or monstrous size, without any dinning and discordant noise or loud alarm, without attempting to harm him who is evoking thee, without hurting any who are of his company'.

A significant condition is that the archimage must impose certain conditions upon the spirit or familiar, and at the end give him very definite licence to depart. Should he seem to linger or tarry, he must be urged to go and hastened on his way. If necessary, he must be even rebuked and chidden in sternest terms for loitering. This shows that these familiars were essentially of the most evil and malignant, since once evoked and permitted to manifest they were loath to disappear...<sup>1</sup>

This flowery description shows that, despite Summers' effort to write it up as something quite out of the way, *Zekerboni* was to all intents and purposes a mere rehash of the *Clavicle*, and followed the usual pattern. Nevertheless one can well believe that in the eighteenth century all those who knew that Casanova had these magical books thought him a great magician; which, he said, was far from displeasing him.

That was why he boasted to Manuzzi. Now they had become the instruments of his doom and the agents of his downfall. Magic, however, as if to make amends, came to his aid in prison, when, catching at any straw, he had recourse to his own Kabbalistic system in order to make up his mind on the subject of the date of his projected escape. Determining to use his adored Ariosto as others used the Bible or Virgil, he wrote his question, asking in which of the cantos of the *Orlando Furioso* he would find the prediction of the day of his deliverance. He then built his famous pyramid of numbers, subtracted the number nine from each couple, and thus

<sup>1</sup> M. Summers, *Witchcraft and Black Magic*, London, 1945, p. 139.

obtained nine as the final number. Following the same method for the stanza and the verse, he obtained a seven and a one:

I took the poem with a heart palpitating as much as if I had placed absolute trust in the oracle. I opened the book, turned over the pages and found:

Between the end of October and the beginning of November.<sup>1</sup>

What made this oracle all the more striking was that November 1 is All Saints' Day, and Casanova had other reasons for believing that this would be a propitious night on which to make his attempt. He therefore decided on the date his oracle had predicted, and got triumphantly away.

One cannot help remembering the vision of Christ in His glory vouchsafed to Cellini on All Souls' Day in the fortress of San Angelo, and pondering for a moment on the very different manner in which these two Italians spent the feast-days in their prisons. But it must not be forgotten that Cellini also made his escape, although not quite such a daring one and not so successfully; and it should be added that Casanova also saw dream-visions when under the Leads; although these were directly due, as he knew, to a mind obsessed, indeed almost deranged, by solitary confinement and the perusal of the hysterical *Mystical City* of Sister Mary Agrada. For, in spite of his lively imagination and in spite of his leanings towards magic, mysticism was foreign to his nature.

Magic, having thrown him into prison and helped him to escape, had a further plan in store for him. About a year after the supreme effort of his manhood and his wits had restored him to the world, he was amusing himself madly in Paris without any thought for the morrow. Indeed, having been given a permit to sell State lottery tickets, he was more than usually wealthy and making a tremendous splash in Parisian society. It was from pure love of fun, and without any motive other than display, that he found himself giving proof of his magical skill to his friend the Count de la Tour d'Auvergne. The latter was laid low with sciatica, and Casanova, he hardly knew why, found himself assuring the patient that it was not a true sciatica, but one susceptible of being cured by magical means. The Count, always ready for a lark, told the would-be

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, op. cit. III, p. 123. He left the prison at midnight on October 31, 1756.



magician to go ahead; and then could hardly keep his countenance when, having purchased the necessary ingredients without bargaining and mixed them with the invalid's urine, Casanova demanded that there should be no laughter whilst the operation was being performed. The charming actress Camille was also hard put to it not to explode when he began to trace Solomon's Seal with a wand dipped in the mixture on the thigh of her afflicted friend, whilst she massaged him vigorously according to instructions. Casanova meanwhile recited what he described as meaningless outlandish gibberish; but curiously enough all desire to laugh had left the gay young pair before the ceremony was completed. Quite contrary to Casanova's expectations, this piece of solemn tomfoolery effected a cure, and d'Auvergne was extremely impressed. He wished to spread the story, but Casanova, not wanting to be shown up for a charlatan, forbade him to do so, and only agreed with a good deal of reluctance to be presented as a wonder-worker to the Count's aunt, the celebrated Marquise d'Urfé.

This proved to be yet another landmark in his life due to monkeying with magic; and a landmark that one could well spare, although for six years (1757-63) the Marquise proved a veritable gold-mine as far as the adventurer was concerned, completely eclipsing Bragadin. She was fifty-two when he first met her, exactly twenty years his senior; but whether by accident or design he always added another twenty to her age; whereas on the whole his more gallant custom was to subtract a considerable number of years from the life of any woman in whom he was interested. In this case however, since love was not involved, he was probably genuinely mistaken.

She might well be difficult to date, being so extraordinarily, extravagantly eccentric. Highly intelligent in every other way, she could hardly be called *compos mentis* on the subject of magic, and as she was almost entirely absorbed in that, she must indeed have seemed next door but one to insanity. She lived habitually in a world in which powders of projection, the elixir of life, sylphs, water-nymphs, gnomes and immortal Rosicrucian sages were as familiar and as real as ration-books, clothing-coupons, bus-drivers and postmen are to us. And yet this great lady also moved in the highest French society and had complete control over her vast fortune. She spent the greater part of it on her hobby, being

economical, not to say parsimonious, in other ways; but money was no object where magic was concerned. She had collected a wonderful library of rare occult manuscripts and books, the flotsam and jetsam of which finally floated into the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; and she had fitted up an alchemistical laboratory which must have been the envy of less wealthy practitioners. Deeply versed and incredibly learned in all the branches of the art and science of magic, she would, or so one imagines, be far from easy to impress by such a mere tyro as Casanova; and the latter would have to be on the tips of his toes not to fail outright in his preliminary examination by such an adept. But Casanova exaggerated either her knowledge or his own relative ignorance or the profound effect he had upon her at the first meeting; he could never have impressed her (even deranged as she was) if he had not been able to meet her on her own ground. Confessing unashamedly to trickery, Casanova was always reluctant to own to solid learning, especially in such a silly subject as he insisted the magic arts to be; yet he was able to hold his own with Madame d'Urfé and, more than that, when it came to the planetary spirits. The book impounded by the Inquisition had not been read in vain and was now bearing fruit.

I am not going to recapitulate the complicated ramifications of one of the most elaborate, ingenious and hard-hearted frauds ever undertaken by a magician. Those who wish to follow its unpleasing course must consult Casanova. There is at least this much to be said in his favour, that cool calculation played a minor part in the business which was largely a matter of improvisations; and that Casanova, once having set his hand to the plough, could hardly turn back. He had tacitly accepted Madame d'Urfé's identification of himself as one of the immortal, omnipotent, omniscient Rosicrucian Grand Masters before he knew what she expected of him; and must therefore try to satisfy her or declare himself a charlatan. Proud, vain, vulnerable, he could not have faced the music; quite apart from the fact that he was dazzled both by her rank and by her fortune. He knew moments of remorse, very unusual with him, but quietened the murmurings of his conscience with the reflexion that, if he did not deceive her in this matter, someone else would; better therefore that he should profit from her folly than another. I believe that the 'other' was Saint-Germain, and that Casanova underrated himself. Not even the Man of Mystery, supposedly in

possession of the elixir of life, would have been capable of the brilliant and sustained series of highly imaginative improvisations with which Casanova met Madame d'Urfé's increasingly urgent demands to transform her into a man so that she might hold converse with elemental spirits:

She had told me several times that she was ready to give all she had to become a man, and that she knew it depended on me. One day when she was talking to me about it in those persuasive accents which lead one on, I told her that I must acknowledge that I was in fact master of the operation, but that I could not bring myself to perform it on her because I should have to make her die first. I thought that this confession would cure her desire to pass through the test; but let my readers judge of my surprise when I heard her say:

—I know, and I even know the kind of death I should be exposed to, but I am ready.

—And what kind of death is it, Madam?

—From the same poison from which Paracelsus died. . . .

—You see, she said, that it only needs the masculine *verb* proceeding from an immortal being. I have been instructed that this depends on you; and I cannot believe that you will lack the courage through ill-advised pity for my old carcass.

At these words I got up and went to stand by the window which gave on the quay, and remained there for a full quarter of an hour reflecting on her folly. When I returned to the table at which she was seated, she looked at me attentively and said with some emotion:

—Is it possible, my dear friend, that you have been weeping? I did not try to deceive her, and, having taken my sword and my hat, I left her with a sigh.<sup>1</sup>

It probably was a rather *mauvais quart d'heure* for Casanova; but, once having bitten into the sour apple, he went on, trying first one way and then another to stage something which would satisfy Madame d'Urfé temporarily, and never at a loss for reasons why the operation had not been successful. He was harassed by the necessity of finding a confederate: a little boy to pass as his son and to receive the dying soul of Madame d'Urfé; or a woman to bear a son to him; or a man to play the male part by the Marquise. But one after another of the confederates proved treacherous to him; and finally a magnificent nuptial ceremony was enacted between the

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, op. cit. III, pp. 297f.

'immortal' Casanova and the ecstatic d'Urfé, in which a beautiful young 'water-nymph' played the part of hand-maiden. The fruit of this union was by a mystic process later to become the Marquise herself, who would thus be regenerated when she died. Not only was Casanova convinced that the union would bear no fruit; but the former male confederate was exposing his trickery in letters to the Marquise. She did not believe a word against him then; but would she not do so when she became aware that the masculine *verb* was a failure? Casanova took leave of her in 1763, and never saw her again.

...August the first [he wrote about his sojourn in London in the same year] was a day of ill-omen. I have marked it in *red ink* in these Memoirs. I received a letter from Paris...Mme du Romain wrote announcing the death of Mme d'Urfé, who had unintentionally poisoned herself by drinking too much of her *universal panacea*. She had made a strange will, by which she appointed as heir the son or daughter who should be born after her death; she believed herself to be with child by the operation of the sun. A codicil appointed me as tutor to the infant yet unborn...The clause in the will which mentioned me threw me into despair; I realized that I would be the laughing-stock of Paris.<sup>1</sup>

—By the way, he said, have you any news of the Marquise d'Urfé?

—She is dead.

—Dead? I was certain that it would end that way. And in what state did she die?

—She imagined herself to be with child.

—I hope that you don't believe that?

—I am convinced of her error.<sup>2</sup>

This eerie little conversation was held between Casanova and Saint-Germain in Holland in 1764, or may have been held; but there was not a word of truth in it, nor in the London notice. Madame d'Urfé was not dead, a fact which Casanova very well knew; she did not die until November 1775, and then she left a perfectly sensible will behind her, in which Casanova's name was not mentioned. We must deduce that she was dead to him from 1763 onwards, and that Casanova seized the opportunity to end his story neatly. But since he must have known that the real facts would give him the lie as soon as the *Memoirs* were published, it is at least on the cards that

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, op. cit. v, p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vi, p. 77.

the false death is a clue: a word to the wise that the whole of the tale was invented. I would not put it past Casanova; and it is perhaps also significant that in the whole course of the fabulous intrigue he never once hinted that fate took a hand in the game; he represented it as unblushing fraud throughout.

The tale he told of his famous 'kabbala', the banker of Amsterdam, M. d'O (Hope) and the latter's charming daughter Esther takes an entirely different line. Exhibiting his oracle in order to impress Mr Hope and Esther, he was asked to answer a question about a ship two months overdue in Amsterdam, reported to have been seen sinking. Some spirit of mischief made him extract the news that it was still afloat and would soon reach port. Mr Hope thereupon decided to buy the vessel from the owner who was offering it for a song. Thoroughly alarmed, Casanova insisted on consulting the oracle again, and arranged matters so that the answer should run: 'In such cases one must neither *believe* nor *hazard*. Your repentance would be too painful.' What therefore was his consternation when Esther, who was transposing the figures, read out: 'In such cases you must neither *fear* nor *hesitate*'! Hope immediately bought the ship, and it was soon afterwards reported as having safely reached Madeira. This delightful tale with its unexpected *peripeteia* certainly looks as if Casanova were testifying to a direct intervention of fate. Alas, he was lying. The story of the overdue boat and the lucky gamble of the 'Dutch merchant Hop' was perfectly true; but it had taken place early in 1758 and Casanova did not leave Paris for Holland until the August of that year; although, in order to gain credence for his Kabbalistic prophecy, he advanced the date of his arrival in the Netherlands by the requisite number of months. After staggering under this blow, we can bear the loss of the fascinating Esther with equanimity. She was as mythical as the oracular utterance. This interesting mixture of fiction and facts goes far to prove my contention that Casanova, whilst openly confessing to his magical mummeries, also aimed at insinuating in the minds of his readers that he was possessed of certain mysterious gifts.

It was this reputation finally which earned him his appointment as librarian to Count Waldstein-Wartemberg at Dux in Bohemia, the rather depressing haven in which he passed his last years; but which at least sheltered him from the misery of downright penury

and degradation so often the lot of his kind. And his conversation towards the end of his life turned frequently to Kabbalism, magic and macaroni with nostalgic impartiality.

The part played by magic in the life of Casanova was certainly no minor one. It contributed almost as much to his exchequer as the gaming-table. His interest in it, his knowledge of it, his financial exploitation of it are patent. His attitude towards it is more ambiguous. Using it for harmless mystifications as well as for downright fraud, and always deprecating any kind of belief in it, he seems to have believed in it all the same, to the extent at least of consulting his 'kabbala' at the great crisis in his life when he was about to break prison. All magicians worthy of the name are probably both deluded and deluding, although the proportions vary enormously; and Casanova must be reckoned among their number, being a charlatan by profession, who was sometimes caught in his own toils. Such as he was, however, he conducted at the age of twenty-three one of those full-dress conjuration-scenes which are laid down in the manuals.

Having quite fortuitously come across an eccentric individual in Mantua who owned among other highly-prized junk a curiously-shaped old knife which he firmly believed to have been the weapon with which Saint Peter had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Casanova immediately declared that he himself possessed the sheath; and that together they had the power to raise all hidden treasures in the Papal States. His simple scheme at that point was to mulct Capitani, the owner of the knife, of a handsome sum for the sheath. But when he heard that a friend of Capitani's, a wealthy peasant, had located a hidden hoard in his cellar, he flung himself exuberantly into the possibilities of drama and fun which this situation held for him. All aflame to play the part of magician, he hastened to the public library where, with the aid of an encyclopaedia, he wrote up a very plausible history of the suspected treasure; he then fabricated a likely-looking sheath from the remains of an old boot in the courtyard of his inn, and thus equipped, modestly confessed to Capitani that he was the magician they were seeking. The latter was not slow to believe him, for Casanova had used his quick wits to great advantage in their previous conversation; and it was soon decided that they should seek out George Franzia, the peasant, and propose that the operation to raise the

treasure be performed. They therefore set off together to Cesena where Franzia lived and found him more than willing; moreover he had another and a less doubtful treasure as far as Casanova was concerned, his eldest daughter Javotte, a comely wench of fourteen. Things were now in a fair train. Casanova demanded to know the reasons for supposing that a treasure was buried in Franzia's cellar and was assured that an oral tradition of eight generations bore witness to it; also that loud noises were heard proceeding from underground at night; that the cellar door kept on opening and shutting by itself, and that pyramidal flames were often seen to wander through the courtyard at night, obviously the demon-guardians. Casanova appeared impressed, and solemnly warned Franzia against locking the cellar-door, otherwise an earthquake would destroy the premises, spirits desiring liberty before anything else. It was now Franzia's turn to be astounded; for a sage who had visited the family forty years earlier had said exactly the same thing, which seemed to prove the *bona fides* of this very young wizard. The sage in question had begun operations to raise the treasure; but three days before they were complete, the Inquisition had got wind of the matter, and the magus had decamped:

How does it come about [inquired Franzia] that magic cannot resist the Inquisition?

Because the monks have a greater number of devils at their disposal than we have [answered Giacomo Casanova].<sup>1</sup>

He took the trouble to investigate the mysterious phenomena himself; he heard the underground knocking and saw the cellar-door opening and shutting without being able to discover any reason for it; he therefore determined in his own mind to believe that it was due to some trickery and to investigate no further. Here again is a gentle hint that there is more in these matters than meets the eye. As for the pyramidal flames, and the shadows wandering about the courtyard, he saw those too, but, convinced that they were natural phenomena, and well acquainted with the former in other parts of Italy, he discounted them and turned his mind to the forthcoming operation. The seduction of Javotte, the fun of acting the exorcist, and a goodly sum of money from either Franzia, or Capitani, or both were his straightforward if reprehensible aims.

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, op. cit. II, p. 68.

Meanwhile he was determined to omit nothing which could do honour to the ceremony over which he was to preside.

He ordered, and himself kept, rigorous fasts. He ordered ablutions and saw to it that they were carried out, he presiding over those of Franzia, Capitani and Javotte, and she presiding over his. He also ordered Franzia to go into Cesena and buy without bargaining a length of white linen, thread, scissors, needles, storax, myrrh, sulphur, olive-oil, camphor, a ream of paper, pens, ink, twelve sheets of parchment, pincers and a piece of olive wood capable of making a wand of about one and a half feet. These objects would therefore all be virgin, in the sense that they had never been used before, an expedient sometimes recommended in the texts for those magicians who were unable to make their own instruments. The instructions to buy without haggling (which went sorely against the grain as far as Franzia was concerned) were also a feature of magical rituals. 'Solomon', it may be remembered, laid it down that the garment of the magician should be made of white linen spun by a pure maiden; and Javotte was accordingly set to the rather lengthy task of making Casanova's robe and hood and the crown of parchment, on which the high-spirited young wizard painted terrifying characters and figures. She also constructed the grand circle by sewing strips of paper together, embellished by Casanova with the most bizarre figures he could invent. He then himself fashioned his magic wand from the olive-branch, and the preliminary operations were complete.

It will be noticed that he adhered with commendable faithfulness to the spirit, and whenever possible to the letter, of the instructions given in the *Key of Solomon*; for, as he put it himself, he was madly in love with his rôle of magician and was practising magic for magic's sake. Yet 'Solomon' would have turned in his grave when it came to the ablutions of Javotte; for no other part was assigned to the pure virgin in his manual than that of spinning the robe. But Casanova involved her deeply in the preparations, because he was Casanova, and her beauty was one of the reasons why he was playing his magical game. Nevertheless, enthralled as he was, and determined to seduce her, he respected her virginity whilst the ritual operation was pending, although promising himself to make her full and honourable amends for his abstinence once the ceremony was over. This was to take place on the night of the full moon,



when he was to conjure the gnomes to raise the treasure to the surface of the ground within the magic circle. For had not 'Solomon' said that gnomes were the guardians of treasures in the earth? Of course, said Casanova, I knew very well that the operation would not be successful; but I also knew that I should not lack reasons to satisfy Franzia and Capitani. In this frame of mind he embarked upon the venture. Javotte remained indoors. Her father and his crony were stationed on the balcony to watch the proceedings and to keep a look-out that no one else did so; they were also told to hold themselves ready to execute any orders the magician might give them. The latter now took off all his profane garments, vested himself in the habiliments Javotte had made, let his hair hang free, put the crown on his head and the great circle over his shoulders. Holding the wand in one hand and the miraculous knife in the other he descended into the court. There he spread out the circle, uttering barbarous words as he did so, circumambulated it three times, and then leapt into the centre:

There, crouched down without movement for two minutes, I rose and fixed my regard on a great livid cloud rising on the western horizon, whilst the thunder growled loudly from the same direction. How sublime I should have appeared in the stupefied eyes of my two idiots if, having examined the sky a little earlier, I had taken it into my head to announce the phenomenon!

The cloud spread with extreme swiftness, and the vault of heaven soon seemed to me to be covered with a mortuary cloth, furrowed in all directions with vivid flashes of lightning.

Since this was the most natural thing in the world, I had not the slightest reason to be surprised; nevertheless a beginning of fear made me feel the desire to be back in my room. And soon my fear increased in seeing thunderbolts mingled with the lightning following each other rapidly and surrounding me on all sides. I then experienced the effects which terror can have upon the mind; for I reasoned that, since the thunderbolts which were furrowing the earth around me and continually exploding over my head were not annihilating me, this was simply because they could not enter my magic circle. I thus adored the work of my own hands! This silly reason stopped me from leaving the circle, in spite of the fear which made me shiver inside it. Without this belief, fruit of a craven fear, I should not have stayed there for a moment; and my speedy flight would have unsealed the eyes of my two dupes, who would then have realized that, far from being a magician, I was merely a

coward. The violence of the wind, the resounding noise of the thunder, a penetrating cold and my fear made me tremble like an aspen-leaf. . . . I recognized the presence of a revengeful God who awaited me there to punish at one blow all my infamies and to put an end to my incredulity by annihilating me.<sup>1</sup>

And indeed so strong was the impression and relatively so lasting, that Javotte now inspired Casanova with a holy awe, and he abandoned his designs on her virtue to her evident disappointment. Nor could he bring himself to repeat the experiment. He told Franzia and Capitani that the gnomes had forced him to agree to wait for an indefinite period before raising the treasure; presented them with the spurious history he had written in Mantua; made them swear to wait for his return or for the appearance of another magician with exactly the same knowledge as he before attempting another operation; burnt the crown and the circle; ordered everything else to be kept for his next appearance; sold the sheath for about £125 to Capitani, and then made off:

What contributed to make this resolution to depart irrevocable was the apprehension that some pious peasant might have seen me performing my juggleries in my so-called magic circle, and that, informed by his zeal, the very holy and very infernal Inquisition might pursue me with the intention of exposing me to public view in a fine auto-da-fé, in which I had not the slightest desire to be the principal actor.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, as we have seen, though he abandoned this particular undertaking, he did not abandon magic, and the Inquisition got him.

It was undoubtedly an exciting moment in the history of ritual magic, when Casanova was trapped in the circle by that terrific thunderstorm with panic in his heart; and it would be almost enough to make one wonder whether it were not perhaps a transcendental warning, if one did not suspect that it is still more likely to have been a piece of Casanovian stage-machinery. In that case it illustrates yet again the *motif* underlying so many of his tales about magic: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

Leaving the vexed question of what Casanova really thought on the subject unanswered, and coming back to what he did: it is certainly curious that this confessedly fraudulent magician was far

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, op. cit. II, pp. 75 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 77.

more scrupulous in his preparations and far more conscientious about obeying the rules and regulations of magic than his German contemporary whom we shall presently meet, the Jena student Weber. Now Weber almost certainly hoped to raise the treasure located in a vineyard. Casanova as certainly knew that he could do no such thing; and yet he went to far more trouble, and has in fact given the most exact and detailed account of the preliminary preparations to be found anywhere outside the ritual texts themselves. Casanova never did anything by halves; it was the secret of his phenomenal success; of his outrageous conduct; of the bitter enemies he made; of his lamentable decline; of his astounding *Memoirs*; it was the secret of his magic.

(e) *Followers of 'Honorius'*

Considering the highly-coloured version of the rite of 'Honorius' given by Lévi, a certain amount of scepticism accompanies the realization that we have only his word for its popularity in the nineteenth century. I shall be considering the character of Lévi more closely in a subsequent chapter; but for the moment it is sufficient to say that embroidery rather than invention was his long suit, and that though he was much given to romancing, there is generally some solid foundation in fact for the flights of his erratic fancy. It is therefore probable though by no means certain that the followers of the pseudo-Pope who crossed his path were actually disciples of 'Honorius'.

In the first of the two stories in question an artisan of about fifty years of age, presenting an honest and rational appearance, called on the magus imploring him to restore to the speaker the first page of the famous or infamous *grimoire*, which had mysteriously disappeared. Bearing as it did the autograph signature of the master-spirit, it was the most precious part of the manual, and the unhappy sorcerer was lost without it. As reproduced by Waite, the title-page of the *Constitution of Honorius* does in fact display a rudely executed face framed in a triangle and some hieroglyphs which may well purport to represent the signature of the arch-fiend. The artisan-exorcist had possessed this priceless text since the age of ten, had never neglected to perform the 'office' it contained, had never allowed the book to leave his person, had

conformed rigorously to all the prescriptions laid down in its pages, and had now met with this terrible and undeserved misfortune. He was in despair, for he felt that existence was completely meaningless if intercourse with the master-spirit were denied him. Closely questioned by Lévi, he revealed himself to be more muddled than mischievous. He had never made any promises nor entered into any bond with any of the spirits. What is more, he believed that the leaders of the hierarchy were good, the intermediaries alternately good and evil, and the inferiors evil, but not blindly nor irrevocably wicked. The one whom he had constantly invoked had often appeared to him, but did so no longer since his autographed page was lost, and this was the master-spirit Adonaï. It would seem that Lévi's visitor was confusing the names of power in the conjurations for the names of the spirits invoked; but Adonaï (Lord) is an epithet often bestowed (or so it is said) by Satanists on Lucifer; and the luridly-minded Lévi automatically leapt to the conclusion that Satan was involved:

Do you know who Adonaï is?

No: but I wish to behold him once more.

Adonaï is invisible.

I have seen him.

He is without form.

I have touched him.

He is infinite.

He is pretty much about my own height.

The prophets tell us that the hem of his vestment sweeps away the stars of the morning.

He has a very neat surcoat and the whitest linen.

Holy Scripture, moreover, says that none can behold him without dying.

He has a benevolent and jovial countenance.

But how do you proceed to obtain these apparitions?

I perform all that is appointed in the great Grimoire.

What! even the bloody sacrifice?

Certainly.

Wretch! But what is the victim?<sup>1</sup>

The artisan turned pale, said that his interlocutor must know better than he did, and described the effort which the slaughter of the

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic*, London, 1897, p. 466.

innocent creature cost him, and the melancholy sensations it aroused:

One night I had just ended the mournful rites, I was seated within the circle on the inner threshold of my door, and the conflagration of the victim was being finished in a large fire of alder and cypress-wood. Suddenly, close at hand I again saw it, or rather felt it pass; a heart-rending cry rang in my ears, and from that moment I seem to be hearing it always.<sup>1</sup>

But Lévi still continued to probe, insisting that his visitor should name the sacrifice plainly. When he heard that it was a virgin and unblemished kid of a year old as laid down in the ritual, he breathed again; for it was evident that this tyro in the black art did not know the esoteric meaning of 'virgin kid', in other words 'young child'. This gratuitous blackening of a rite already sufficiently dark has not even the excuse in French which it might have in English of the colloquial use of the word kid. It is a concrete instance of Lévi's ineradicable tendency to mythologize about magic, especially about the black variety, which was to have such an influence on his immediate posterity. From this point of view the artisan, if he really existed, was a lucky find:

A true mediaeval sorcerer, a sincere, undoubted sorcerer, in the nineteenth century! A sorcerer who had beheld Satan, under the name of Adonai, dressed like a citizen; and Astaroth under his true diabolical form! What an artistic object, what an archaeological treasure!<sup>2</sup>

For the visitor had also confessed to having summoned up Astaroth, who had appeared in the shape of a gigantic monster, with the body of a hog and the skeleton head of a colossal ox. All this, allowing for a certain amount of embroidery, is not in itself impossible. That is to say, an imperfectly educated man in the mid-nineteenth century who possessed a copy of the *Constitution of Honorius* might well have set about implementing the rites it contained. What he then saw, or thought that he saw, or said that he saw would depend on his nervous susceptibility. On the other hand Lévi strikes one as quite capable of contributing these details, as well as the identification of 'kid' and 'child' to the detriment of 'Honorius'. And what follows, a series of incredible miracles

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 467.

brought about by Lévi in order to thwart the power of the magical manual, cannot be taken seriously and is not worth repeating.

The other story is of greater intrinsic interest. It is entitled *Secret History of the Assassination of the Archbishop of Paris* and gives a vivid account of this event, at which Lévi claimed to have been present. Whether based on first-hand evidence or not, it tallies with other records, except that Lévi calls the perpetrator Louis Verger instead of Jean. This mystical madman, an interdicted priest, struck down Sibour with a knife whilst he was officiating at the inauguration of the novena of Saint Geneviève on January 3, 1857, at Saint-Etienne du Mont. Lévi even included the rabid cry: 'Down with the goddess!' with which the distracted criminal drove the knife home, a reference in all likelihood both to the saint and to the recent proclamation of the Immaculate Conception of which Sibour had been one of the most zealous promoters. It seems possible, therefore, that the unhappy Verger believed that he was striking a blow against idolatry. By what confusion of mind he had also resorted to black magic (if Lévi's tale is true) is easier to understand than to explain. The 'secret history' revealed by the French magus represents the intending assassin as a sinister-looking young priest who applied to Lévi in 1856 for information how best to procure a copy of the *grimoire* of 'Honorius'. He confided in some mutual acquaintances that he had attempted an invocation of the devil by the help of a 'common *grimoire*' in his country presbytery, but that the devil had not put in an appearance, although there had been a violent elemental disturbance, a raging wind which shook the building to its foundations, doors and windows bursting open and hissing sounds proceeding from every corner of the house. He was now in search of a more potent manual, and believed that 'Honorius' would fill the bill. Needless to say Lévi refused outright to help him in his search; whilst a faithful disciple of the magus (called Desbarolles) attempted to put the anonymous caller on his guard against the dangerous and exalted mysticism revealed by the lines of his hand. The abbé listened to this with a doubtful and ominous smile on his pale countenance and took his leave with the words: 'Before long, you will hear of something . . . You will hear me spoken of.'

Although Lévi forgot all about this strange young man, he was troubled by warning nightmares of a symbolical nature for two

nights running before the assassination took place; and he was horrified when he learnt during the course of the trial that Verger was none other than the ambiguous young priest who had been so ominously anxious to procure a copy of the *Constitution of Honorius*. He had succeeded in his quest, as a bookseller told the magus, and had paid the then considerable sum of a hundred francs for the prize. Thereafter he had perpetrated the deed. There is nothing inherently improbable in this 'secret history'; but neither is it improbable that Lévi smuggled 'Honorius' into the tale of the assassination. His eloquent conclusion rather strengthens the latter supposition:

Thus beyond doubt, the unhappy priest had obtained the fatal Grimoire, and had prepared himself for murder by a succession of sacrileges. The wretched man felt certain he would not die; he believed the emperor would be forced to pardon him; some honourable exile awaited him; his crime had brought him immense notoriety; his musings would be worth their weight in gold at the booksellers; he would become fabulously rich, would attract the notice of some great lady, and would marry beyond the seas. By similar promises the phantom demon formerly incited Gilles de Laval, lord of Retz, from crime to crime. A man capable of evoking the devil, according to the rites of the Grimoire of Honorius, is so far on the road to evil that he is inclined to all kinds of hallucinations and falsehoods; but the aberrations of perversity do not constitute madness, as the execution of this criminal proved. The desperate resistance he offered to his executioners is well known. 'It is a deception', he cried, 'I cannot die thus. An hour only—one hour—to write to the emperor; he would save me!'

Who, then, had deceived him? Who had promised him life? Who had assured him beforehand of an impossible clemency, for his reprieve would have outraged the public conscience? Ask all this of the Grimoire of Honorius!<sup>1</sup>

Ask rather all the other half-demented criminals who have cherished delusions of grandeur and of eleventh hour reprieves, although in fairness to Lévi it should perhaps be pointed out that many witches and warlocks showed the same kind of certainty when awaiting their death in prison. Here again, however, a rational explanation has been suggested: that those in high places who had employed them had promised to come to their assistance if they

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 479.

#### THE DISCIPLES OF 'SOLOMON'

were caught and condemned. Something of the same sort may have been behind Verger's confidence in his release. The part played by the *Constitution of Honorius* in the assassination of the archbishop cannot be taken as proved by Lévi's testimony, although it has plausibility in its favour: for what trustier guide for the performance of a work of evil and destruction such as the murder of an archbishop could there possibly be for a renegade priest than a book of black magic supposedly composed by a Pope?



## CHAPTER III

### THE FAUSTIAN SCHOOL

#### (a) *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*

Both the *Constitution of Honorius* and the *Grand Grimoire* found their way into Germany, and must have been fairly well known at one time, for Scheible discovered them, muddled, mangled and garbled almost beyond recognition in the infernal library of an illiterate Suabian peasant. The text is in that state of corruption bordering on unintelligibility to which manuscripts copied and copied again by uneducated hands are inevitably prone. The German 'Honorius' omitted the Papal Bull, began with an invocation to Ariel and continued with a Conjunction of the Book, taken almost *verbatim* from the French original; although (a truly German 'improvement') the thousand years in hell threatened by the French author were increased to four thousand 'wading in sulphur and fire'. The spirits of the air were then constrained and a chaotic *Liber Spirituum* was given, with St Peter in the middle of the fiends and Lucifer rechristened Lucius Caser. Various other conjurations followed, concluding with the spirits of the days of the week, obviously modelled on the French 'Honorius', although differently named, but receiving much the same gifts.

This second-hand welter of nonsense hardly merits serious attention, and I should have passed it by, were it not for the fact that the text found by Scheible also contains what is called 'a true excerpt from the *Grand Grimoire*, with the omission of the unnecessary passages'; and this is interesting, since it gives the wording of a pact to be signed by an evil spirit. But it differs from its pretended model in a highly important, indeed fundamental, particular, for it is a unilateral pact, whereas of the two given in the *Grand Grimoire* one is conditional and the other bilateral. This latter type of contract entered ritual literature from the legends told about sorcerers in the Middle Ages, and was rooted in the Christian conception of the wickedness of magic and its tragic consequences. The unilateral pact was a relic of the good old days when magicians were magicians indeed and could force

PLATE V



The Faust of *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*



compliance upon the spirits. In its present form it is a development of the Conjunction of the Book, an affirmative answer to it, and therefore of ritual origin. The devil, after certain initial ceremonies, sketchily and confusingly described, amongst them the reading of a Mass of Constraint, is forced to bind himself, by applying his seal at the end of the document, to the following effect.

Speaking in the first person, he swears to appear immediately to any one reading the contract in the Book, and to come in a fair human form, without uproar, deceit or fiery manifestations; to speak whatever language is required; to fetch any treasures asked for from the depths of the earth or the bosom of the sea and transform old coins into current money; to protect the magician from all dangers and to assist him in all straits; to preserve his health, increase his knowledge and fulfil all his desires without exception. All this he swears to do without wiles or guiles, and without inflicting any injury to the body or soul of the exorcist, who shall never suffer in any way from this agreement.

This very advantageous contract, based on the Conjunction of the Book in the French ritual of 'Honorius', left nothing to chance and little to the greediest of imaginations, thus supplementing the two French manuals which it names. Through them the German version was indirectly indebted to the *Key of Solomon* and the *Lemegeton*, but had no first-hand knowledge of these two magical classics. Most of the other German rituals were in the same case; and strangely enough most of the Faustian scholars too. Misled by the title of an innocuous little handbook called *Claviculae Salomonis et Theosophia Pneumatica*, and by the Kabbalistic compilation entitled *Semiphoras and Schemhamphoras Salomonis Regis*, they have looked no further for the *Key of Solomon*. As for the *Lemegeton*, at the very most this was known in part from Wierus' *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, which some, though unexpectedly few, of the compilers of German rituals laid under contribution.

The idea of a *Liber Spirituum* was nevertheless always present in the minds of such writers, and this was probably due to the detailed description of it given by Pseudo-Agrippa in the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*. This famous forgery, almost two-thirds of which consists of direct borrowings from Agrippa's *Third*

*Book*, added to the matter in that volume the description of the appearance and characteristics of the spirits of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon (in that order), and also very valuable information about the construction of the *Liber Spirituum* and the way to use it:

Those magicians who make use of the assistance of demons in their operations have a special way of invoking them. They possess a book called the Book of the Spirits, which is also consecrated, and in which the names of the spirits are written, who must then swear an oath to be obedient to the magician in this world. The paper of this book must be made of virgin paper which has never been used before. On the left side of the book is seen the image of the spirit, on the right side his character and the formula of the oath by which he has bound himself to obedience are written. This contains his name, the rank he occupies in the spirit-world, the operations over which he presides, etc. The places, times and hours over which he rules are observed in his invocation; wherefore in order that the rite may not be defective and ineffective, these are also noted here for the guidance of the magician. The book is carefully locked, because it would be deleterious to the magician to open it casually. Also the effectiveness of the book would be destroyed by profane use, or if the exorcist has a blemished or unchaste nature.<sup>1</sup>

This description of the *Liber Spirituum* was further enhanced by the communication of two alternative methods for summoning the spirits and forcing them to take the oath of allegiance. They are indicated in general terms, advocating the routine to be followed, but descending to no particular instructions. The texts of the invocations and of the oath to be sworn are not given; there is no reproduction of the circle, let alone of the portraits of the spirits; the names, characters, offices, hours and days are also not mentioned. It is, in fact, a commentary on such Books, but would be useless without one. Nevertheless, in the attractive, lucid and nonchalant style of the real Agrippa, the author of this manual made these and the other magical ceremonies he described (white, black, elemental and necromantic) sound both simple and rewarding. A revised version of the *Heptameron* ascribed to Peter of Abano (the title is said to have suggested Boccaccio's) attempted to add to the practical value of 'Agrippa' by giving invocations for

<sup>1</sup> J. Scheible, *Das Kloster*, Stuttgart, 1846, III, pp. 582 f.

## THE FAUSTIAN SCHOOL

the spirits of the air, taken from the *Key of Solomon*, and conceived of as evil. The greater part of this manual, however, was devoted to the angels of the seven days (MICHAEL, GABRIEL, SAMAEL, RAPHAEL, SACHIEL, ANAEL, CASSIEL) with diagrams of circles, hieroglyphic characters, prayers and invocations, as well as those fool-proof lists of the angels governing every hour of every day and night in the week to be found in the *Key of Solomon*. To judge by the questionable nature of the boons to be obtained from these spirits, they were angels in name only, which probably accounts for the great popularity of the *Heptameron*.

It achieved an international reputation, was translated into many European languages, amongst them German, and was duly plundered by the ritual-writers of that country. One is perpetually meeting traces of it in the literature; nevertheless the Kabbalistic *Semiphoras* and *Schemhamphoras* played a more important part, it would seem, in the manuals of the Faustian school. Mentioned by Hartlieb in 1456 and by Tritheim about 1500, it appeared in German in 1686 and was reprinted by Scheible in 1846. This version acknowledged debts to Agrippa's *Third Book*, from which it quoted at least three times, and also mentioned the *Heptameron*. It differed radically from 'Abano' as to the names and the order of the planetary spirits, 'Abano' giving the so-called Heptazonic version, *Schemhamphoras* the Hellenistic arrangement, which was the same as Agrippa's although diverging in certain respects, as the author pointed out:

'Abano'		Agrippa	
MICHAEL	(Sunday)	ORIPHIEL	(Saturn)
GABRIEL	(Monday)	ZECHARIEL	(Jupiter)
SAMAEL	(Tuesday)	SAMAEL	(Mars)
RAPHAEL	(Wednesday)	MICHAEL	(Sun)
SACHIEL	(Thursday)	ANAEL	(Venus)
ANAEL	(Friday)	RAPHAEL	(Mercury)
CASSIEL	(Saturday)	GABRIEL	(Moon)

### *Schemhamphoras*

ZAPHIEL	(Saturn)
ZADKIEL	(Jupiter)
CAMAEL	(Mars)
RAPHAEL	(Sun)
HANIEL	(Venus)
MICHAEL	(Mercury)
GABRIEL	(Moon)

Both the Heptazonic and the Hellenistic versions are to be found in the Greek magical papyri, and the great Faustian classic adopted the names as given in *Schemhamphoras*, one reason among others for believing that this Kabbalistic handbook was used by the authors or editors of the German manual.

Very pious, and indeed at times almost mystical in tone, *Semiphoras* and *Schemhamphoras Salomonis Regis* made full use of Agrippa's *Third Book of Occult Philosophy*, notably on the subject of the Sephiroth. It communicates a rather confused but not hopelessly garbled account of the various ways in which the wonder-working names of God were extracted by the Kabbalists from texts in the Old Testament. The Semiphoras, or sevenfold name, was discovered in various utterances of Jahweh, Adam and Moses; the Schemhamphoras, the seventy-two names, in the three successive texts in Exodus xiv, each of which comprised seventy-two letters. The Sephiroth was also carefully explained. The author (who called himself Solomon) emphasized the miraculous power residing in these Hebrew names; but he followed Agrippa's lead in maintaining that present-day Kabbalists could make no further progress without the name of Jesus, and spoke as a Protestant in deprecating the invocation of the souls of the departed saints. In spite of his religious convictions, some of the powers indicated by the author as inherent in the divine names belong to the realm of black magic: works of destruction and revenge; the invocation of demons; the constraint on both parties to an infernal pact to keep it. Other boons obtainable are of a materialistic nature, although spiritual gifts figure largely too. Besides the names of God, this manual is enriched by a long and complicated angelic hierarchy, based on Dionysius Aeropagita. Ten angels governing the Intelligences; twelve ruling over the Zodiacal signs; seven planetary thrones; seven planetary archangels; seven planetary angels; twenty-eight angels governing the houses of the moon; four ruling over the winds; another four presiding over the elements; these are the chief rulers of the first heaven. There are others for the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh. Some of them, however, have dual and sometimes even treble functions, such as Ariel who is to be found in three categories at least.

Optimists will be sorry to hear that eight evil spirits are mentioned, but will comfort themselves with the fact that the

angels are in an overwhelming majority. The four devils ruling the elements (SAMAEL, AZAZEL, AZAEL, MAHAZAE) were all taken from Agrippa's *Third Book*. Samael also figured in Rabbinical literature as the arch-fiend. Azael, with its alternative Azazel, was one of the fallen angels in *Enoch* and appeared as well in the Greek magical papyri and the *Testament of Solomon*. Milton made Azazel the chief standard-bearer of the infernal armies. The four evil spirits governing the four quarters of the globe (ORIENS, PAYMON, EGYN, AMAYMON) were also copied from Agrippa. Oriens and Amaymon (Amemon) were among the fiends in the *Testament*; Amaymon and Paymon graced the infernal hierarchy in the *Lemegeton*, and Egn may well be a corruption of Eltzen in the *Testament*. Trickling into *Schemhamphoras*, they then flowed into the *Liber Spirituum* of the weighty treatise on ceremonial magic attributed to Faust.

This famous *Threefold Harrowing of Hell*, to give it one of its sub-titles which set a fashion in the naming of Faustian rituals, was published by Scheible from an eighteenth-century manuscript in the Coburg Ducal Library. Another manuscript copy, purporting to have been made from a book printed in Passau in 1612, was in the Weimar Grand Ducal Library. Goethe described it briefly to Zelter in a letter dated November 20, 1829 and copied out two short chapters which correspond roughly to the parallel passages of Scheible's text. To Goethe it appeared naturally enough as 'full of the most reasoned nonsense'; but we cannot dismiss it as lightly as that. Scheible's text was divided into two parts by the compiler and falls naturally into four, each with a separate title:

- A.1. *Doctoris Iohannis Fausti magiae naturalis et innaturalis. Erster Theil. Der Dreyfacher Höllenzwang genannt. Passau Anno 1505.*
- 2. *Dr. Iohannis Fausti cabalae nigrae, magia naturalis et innaturalis.*
- B.1. *Doct. Iohannes Fausti magiae naturalis et innaturalis. Anderer Theil. Sein letztes Testament genannt. Passau 1505.*
- 2. *Nun folgen allhier meine kostbaren Sigilla, welche ich, D. Iohannes Faust, sowohl zu dem Citieren als auch zu dem Schatz-Heben gebraucht habe.*

Internal evidence shows that this compilation is a composite production, and in particular suggests that A.1 and A.2 are by different hands. In fact A.2 is an expansion of A.1, which may



conceivably be the Faustian *Urhöllenzwang*, although it is impossible to dogmatize on such an obscure subject. It takes up only forty pages in the two hundred and sixty of Scheible's text; but the whole as it stands obviously derives from a pre-Faustian magical stratum. Agrippa, Pseudo-Agrippa and *Schemhamphoras* were responsible to a large extent for the doctrine informing the rituals; and these three informative text-books were in their turn based upon the Kabbala. The *Key of Solomon* seems to have been unknown to the authors of *Magia* (as I shall call the treatise for short); and the *Liber Spirituum* was certainly independent of the *Lemegeton*. Pseudo-Agrippa supplied the Platonic idea of such a book, the notion of a hierarchy may have been taken from *Schemhamphoras*, many of the names certainly were. Peuckert makes out a case for a Pseudo-Agrippian authorship of the Faustian hierarchy and its attendant text, since they supplement the information given in the *Fourth Book*. But the marked difference in style rules out this attribution, the one being educated and lucid, the other the very reverse. Kieseewetter's claim that Faust was the originator seems to have even less in its favour. It is true that 'Faust' speaks throughout in the first person; but since it is a magical manual, that almost goes to prove that he did not write it, false ascriptions being one of the constant features of such texts. Moreover, common-sense rebels at the notion that the cheap little trickster and vagabond of the sixteenth century, always out for easy money and quick results, ever sat down and expanded and reconditioned this daunting tome in order to harmonize it with the legends about his own life and to introduce 'my Mephistophiel' whom we have no warrant for believing that he ever mentioned at all during his whole mortal existence.

Putting such insoluble problems to one side, it will probably be best to consider the hierarchy first. There are thirteen categories in A.1 and seventeen in A.2, which omitted two from the first list and added six, as the following table makes clear:

A.1	A.2
1. <i>Five Grand Dukes</i>	1. <i>The Supreme Chief</i>
LUCIFER	NADANNIEL <i>alias</i>
BEELZEBUB	LUCIFER <i>alias</i>
SATAN	BLUDOHN (Pluto) <i>alias</i>
ASTEROTH	BEELZEBUB
BEHERIT	

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### 2. *Four Kings*

URIENS of the East  
PAYMON of the West  
EGYN of the North  
AMAYMON of the South

### 3. *Four Princes*

SAMAEL of Fire  
AZAZEL of Air  
AZAEL of Water  
MAHAZAEI of Earth

### 4. *Seven Electors*

BLUDON  
  
MARBUEL  
  
ARIEL  
  
ACIEL  
  
BARBIEL  
  
MEPHISTOPHIEL  
  
APADIEL

### 2. *Seven Electors*

BARBIEL under ZAPHIEL  
(Saturn)  
MEPHISTOPHIEL under  
ZADKIEL (Jupiter)  
GANAEL seu APADIEL under  
CAMAEL (Mars)  
ACIEL under RAPHAEL  
(Sun)  
ANAEL under HANIEL  
(Venus)  
ARIEL under MICHAEL  
(Mercury)  
MARBUEL under GABRIEL  
(Moon)

### 5. *Seven Counts Palatine*

### 6. *Seven Counts*

### 7. *Seven Barons*

### 8. *Seven Aristocratic Spirits*

### 9. *Seven Middle-Class Spirits*

### 10. *Seven Peasant Spirits*

### 11. *Seven Clever Spirits*

### 12. *Seven Stupid Spirits*

### 13. *Four Free Spirits*

### 3. *Seven Counts Palatine*

### 4. *Seven Counts*

### 5. *Seven Barons*

### 6. *Seven Aristocratic Spirits*

### 7. *Seven Middle-Class Spirits*

### 8. *Seven Peasant Spirits*

### 9. *Seven Clever Spirits*

### 10. *Seven Stupid Spirits*

### 11. *Four Free Spirits*

### 12. *Seven Spirits of the Liberal Arts*

### 13. *Eight Great Fire Spirits*

### 14. *Seven Great Air Spirits*

### 15. *Thirteen Water Spirits*

### 16. *Thirteen Earth Spirits*

### 17. *Four False (or Mock) Spirits*

Although not exactly impressive, this hierarchy is interesting. Beherit or Berith came from Judges, ix, xlv, a god of the infidels, and was included among the devils in the *Lemegeton* and *Pseudo-monarchia Daemonum* where he is described as a great and terrible duke called by some Beall. Nadanniel for Lucifer is unfamiliar to me; and it is strange to find Pluto in the Faustian *galère*, although he also figures in the puppet plays. The four kings and princes were taken from *Schemhamphoras*, and I have already commented upon them; whilst four of the seven Electors (Barbiel, Ariel, Anael and Aciel) were in the same compilation, Ariel probably entering it from the Old Testament, where the name occurs twice: Ezra viii, 16, as a mere proper name, and Isaiah xxix, 1, 2 where it is used for Jerusalem, or the Lion of God, and woe is called down upon it.<sup>1</sup> As for Aciel, as I have already said in connexion with the *Testament of Solomon*, he would appear to be none other than the black sun of the Chaldean cosmos, coming into the Faustian *Liber Spirituum* from Babylonia, Egypt, Greece and Palestine; whilst all the seven so-called Electors, being planetary spirits, derive from the *maskim* of the Akkadians, the seven adversaries of the corresponding gods. The immediate debt for the four I have named was to *Schemhamphoras*, which supplied in addition further down the scale Dirachiel, Amnodiel, Adriel (also in the papyri and in *Enoch*), Amudiel, Tagriel, Amnixiel, Geliel and Requieli. These were all angels in the Kabbalistic manual; in *Magia* they have fallen among the fiends.

The actual classification down to the seven peasant spirits is hierarchically based on the Holy Roman Empire; from then onwards cross-classification becomes the order of the day. The seven clever spirits are the seven Electors; the stupid spirits were chosen with a fine lack of snobbishness from among the Counts Palatine, the Counts, the Barons and the aristocracy. The four free spirits formed an independent category (representing murder, discord, theft and lust); as did also the spirits of the so-called liberal arts (philosophy, painting, surgery, astrology, mining, hunting and architecture). The elemental spirits, whose natures are in close accord with the descriptions given by Trithemius, were taken, or at least the fire and water spirits were, for the most

<sup>1</sup> In the *Key of Solomon*, the *Grand Grimoire* and the *Constitution of Honorius*, Ariel is a divine or angelic name.

part explicitly from the preceding categories shared by A.1 and A.2. The four false spirits, lords respectively of transformation, vegetation, hunting and love, probably derive from the fraudulent spirits put into circulation by Porphyry.

This infernal *omnium gatherum* was illustrated, if not exactly adorned, by forty-two coloured plates in A.2 purporting to be spirit-likenesses. If these do not add to the lustre of the sitters, they would at least enormously increase the practical value of the Book of the Spirits, if Pseudo-Agrippa is to be believed. According to Scheible, the Coburg manuscript which he printed was beautifully got up, and the hundred and forty-six coloured plates most carefully executed. A certain Karl Kohl copied them faithfully for Scheible, slightly reduced in size. Over a hundred of the plates are finely executed diagrams of circles in black and red, the work of a skilled draughtsman and pleasing in their general effect. The same cannot be said of the portraits, whose original artist was at much the same mental level as the author of A.2 and may well have been one and the same man. The frontispiece presents Faust seated in a book-lined study, holding an enormous tome in his hands, which is presumably *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*. Bearded, ruddy and portly, a grey turban on his head, enveloped in a grey robe and set off by the folds of a billowing curtain, he is the very incarnation of that snugness and smugness which flourished in the *Biedermeier* period. Lucifer, on the other hand, is a fairly spirited effort to portray the arch-enemy of mankind as a reddish-brown flying dragon with a lashing tail, fearsome claws, bat's wings, horns and a horrible human face expectorating flames. The chain which had bound him in hell is still attached to one of his hind legs, and (one hopes) will come into its own again. An honourable mention should also be made of the representation of those devils who manifest in bestial guise. If conventional, some feeling for reality is observable here; especially in the picture of the Count Palatine called Camniel, displayed as a savage leopard couched upon a rock. Otherwise no twentieth-century heart will miss a beat over the portraits of the Faustian fiends. They are ugly enough at times, even repulsive in an unimaginative way; but the artist never rose above the grotesque into the realms of the sinister, the gruesome or the weird.

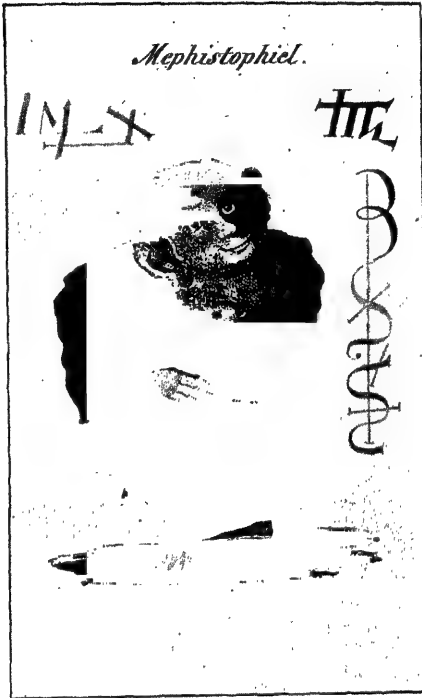
The stunted appearance of the hosts of hell further deprives

them of frightfulness. Yet they were not meant to be represented as dwarfs; for Marbuel, stated to be tall, is as undersized as all the rest. Excrescences apart, with which some of the fiends are endowed, they recall to mind the figures on Happy Family and Snap packs of cards. Equally eccentric and hardly more expressive are the elemental spirits: seven fatuous little fire-fiends grouped on one plate; a blowzy water-nymph; a sleekly serpentine earth-spirit with a brazen hussy's face. The lumpish spirits of the liberal arts are even less attractive; and the four free spirits of crime are peculiarly revolting and preposterous. One portrait, however, amidst all this ugly and childish nonsense can hardly fail to please: Mephistophiel in his human aspect, a cosy, tubby, monkish little creature, with an engaging and obliging expression. In his other aspect he is a fierce black bear; but no one could fear him in his human form. Apart from him, not one of the other fiends depicted is worth a second glance.

Even so this portrait is disconcerting, being the very antithesis of the elegant, slender, cynical and saturnine personality nowadays associated with Faust's familiar spirit, who I think will also be thought to seem rather oddly placed among the planetary demons called Electors. It was of course in an attempt to give him suitable prominence that his name was smuggled into this list. From the first Faustbook down to 1755, he was called Mephostophiles. In *Magia* the first 'o' is replaced by the now familiar 'i'; and the termination -phiel which alternates with -philes, -philus and -phielis brought the newcomer into line with his peers in the Electorate and also with the vast majority of the fiends listed in the hierarchy. Where and how the original name Mephostophiles came into being remains a mystery. I myself side with those who believe that it was a faulty Greek version of Lucifugum, the category invented by Psellus and adopted in the *Grand Grimoire*. Certainly the description given by Tritheim and quoted above<sup>1</sup> is strongly applicable to the evil spirit in the Spies Faustbook, but not to the Mephistophiel of *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* to judge by his portrait, and also by 'Faust's' references to him and his own 'confession':

But my MEPHISTOPHILUS, when he comes in a cruel guise, then there is not much one can do with him, because of his cruel and horrible

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 35. In the Urfaustbook Mephisto was said to visit Faust in the shape of a monk.



Mephistopheles in *Magia Naturalis*  
et *Innaturalis*



## THE FAUSTIAN SCHOOL

shape; otherwise he is easy to talk with, and he is quick to be persuaded to allow one to speak with him and treat with him for whatever one wants. . . . If you wish to begin properly, you must begin by summoning my *MEPHISTOPHIELIS*, who is the spirit of all secret arts, so that you can learn much from him in this respect. But he does not like to make pacts; on the contrary, before he will make a pact with you, he first warns very faithfully against it, telling one to reflect upon what one is losing. But if one does not heed this warning, then he will do it and make a pact with one for all arts whatever they may be. One can profit to a certain extent by this spirit, but only through arts.<sup>1</sup>

This sounds rather tepid, and the following account rather flat:

This hellish Grand-Duke *MEPHISTOPH.* appeared to me, Faust, first in a cross form and in a very cruel guise, like a bear, then mannerly like a lion; but through my persistence in my conjurations I managed to get him to promise to come to my study, and he came in the form of an old grey man. This spirit immediately made a pact with me for twenty-four years, and promised to bring me quick as thought to any place. Also I was to learn from him all the secret arts of nigromancy, and he promised to teach me magic properly. He also said: 'All secret arts of nature lie hidden in me. I govern in the hour of *JUPITER*; therefore I am very much attached to man, and warn him against making pacts. But if he will not heed my warning, then he will find no mercy from me when his hour strikes; nor would the star of *LUCIFER* my *PRINCIPAL* which is called *CERUMEPIHITON* and hardens the heart of men, allow it. I am most friendly when I appear as a grey man.'<sup>2</sup>

Although the spirit called *Mephostophiles* was obliged to obtain the permission of Satan before signing a pact with Faust in the legend, he did not warn him against embarking upon the contract. On the contrary, when Faust began to waver on hearing talk of eternal damnation, the terrible spirit flashed back with these words:

And wilt thou not, tis yet thy lot;  
Since tis thy lot, thou'lt fly me not,  
Should one hold thee, thou'lt know it not;  
Thou'lt fly me not, prayers help no jot.  
Thy heart's despair has brought thee there.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Scheible, *Doktor Johannes Faust's Magia naturalis et innaturalis oder Dreyfacher Höllenzwang* . . . , Stuttgart, 1849, pp. 10 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 45 f. The planetary spirits called Electors in A.1 and in the beginning of A.2 are called Grand-Dukes later in A.2.

<sup>3</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, Stuttgart, 1846, II, p. 947. The first Faustbook, 1587.



The pact had not even been drawn up formally, let alone signed, when this fearful doom was uttered. Here therefore *Magia* was not in harmony with the legend, which was nevertheless obviously in the author's mind in the above description of the first meeting with Mephisto. All the same it is a much less terrifying affair than the one to be found in the Spies Faustbooks which P. F. rendered into such telling English, nor do the details tally:

...then began Doctor *Faustus* to call for *Mephostophiles* the Spirite, and to charge him in the name of *Beelzebub* to appeare there personally without any long stay: then presently the Diuel began so great a rumor in the Wood, as if heauen and earth would have come together with winde, the trees bowing their tops to the ground, then fell the Diuell to bleare as if the whole Wood had been full of Lyons, and sodainly about the Circle ranne the Diuell as if a thousand Wagons had been running together on pauered stones. After this at the foure corners of the Wood it thundred horribly, with such lightnings as if the whole worlde, to his seeming, had been on fire. . . . sodainly ouer his head hanged houering in the ayre a mighty Dragon. . . . presently not three fadome aboue his head fell a flame in manner of a lightning, and changed it selfe into a Globe . . . sodainly the Globe opened and sprang vp in height of a man: so burning a time, in the end it conuerted to the shape of a fiery man. This pleasant beast ranne about the circle a great while, and lastly appeared in manner of a gray Frier, asking *Faustus* what was his request. *Faustus* commaunded that the next morning at twelue of the clocke hee should appeare to him at his house; but the diuel would in no wise graunt: *Faustus* began againe to coniure him in the name of *Beelzebub*, that he should fulfil his request; whereupon the Spirit agreed.<sup>1</sup>

The manifestations occurring during conjurations are sometimes very vividly described in the rituals, and the Faustian *Sea-Spirit* has a most dramatic account of the appearance of Lucifer and his cohorts. The tone of *Magia* is much more pedestrian throughout. And yet during the lengthy proceedings of A.2 the seven Electors are introduced by turn and describe their own characters in dialogues with 'Faust'. This method, though not so well carried out, is the same as the one employed in the *Testament of Solomon*; but it lacks the frame-work of the building of the Temple which

<sup>1</sup> P. M. Palmer and R. P. More, *The Sources of the Faust Tradition*, New York, 1936, pp. 137f. The 'Lyons' are devils in 'Spies'.

gave coherence and a certain epic quality to the whole. Still, even the plodding author of *Magia* (A.2) surrounded the figures of Ariel and Aciel with an aura of distinctiveness which Mephistophiel somehow lacks. Faust's familiar spirit never achieved his rightful place as the hero-villain of this manual. That position was reserved for the dangerous but rewarding Aciel. Yet lip-service was paid throughout to the *parvenu* among the Electors. He was represented not only as the spirit with whom the author made his pact, but was also continually introduced at question-time, giving invaluable information on points of procedure in operations and experiments, on what invocations to use and what methods to employ in manufacturing *electrum magicum*, magic mirrors, magic crystals, magic pentacles and seals. It is almost like listening to the voice of Mrs Markham instructing her children in the history of England and France whenever 'my Mephistophiel' takes up the burden of explanations. But in spite of this conscientious adherence to the data of the legend, Aciel dominates the magical scene, a prepotent spirit, and recognized as such from the preamble onwards, much the most dangerous and guileful, but also paying in unlimited wealth for the perils and hardships undergone in mastering him. For he is the lord of all the treasures hidden in the earth. Being, as I believe, the black sun of the Akkadians, his sombre lustre outshone Mephisto's and was well calculated to dazzle magicians, especially those whose one aim, from the seventeenth century onwards, was to locate buried treasure by invoking the aid of spirits. Although his regent the sun is well-disposed to the human race and forces Aciel to serve men, the fiend himself hates mankind and will only yield up his secrets under severe pressure. In fact he must be scourged to do so. Even then he cannot be trusted, being a master of guile, as those who make pacts with him may learn to their cost, for he can be no man's servant. It is therefore better to deal with his vassal the Count Palatine Camniel, if Aciel permits it. A pact with either promises undreamt-of wealth; but there is no redemption from it, and it falls due at once if any attempt is made to substitute one soul for another.

The sinister and potent Aciel certainly threw Mephistophiel into the shade, and most of the other Electors too. The Martian Apadiel incited to war, wrath and strife, as one would expect;

made victors and slaves, and granted supernatural strength and resolution to those with whom he condescended to ally himself by means of a pact. The placing of armies in the field; works of evil and rain-making were other functions he performed. Anael, the spirit of Venus, manifested in female form, but called himself Lord of Love with all the gifts which that entailed. Riches, honour and beautiful women fell to the lot of the lucky wight who summoned Anael when his star was in the ascendant; but the Saturnine Barbiel could hardly be prevailed upon to associate with mortals; and Marbuel, moderately well disposed towards them, though absolutely essential to the locating of buried treasure (moonlight), could not lift it. Aciel was necessary for that operation.

The planetary nature of these spirits was clearly indicated in their confessions to 'Faust'; and Ariel in especial manifested something like real character in his dialogue with the exorcist, character of a mythical nature pointing back to Hermes and Mercury. He is of course of particular interest on account of Shakespeare's treatment of this spirit in *The Tempest*. Both have at least the quality 'mercurial' in common. As his planet is Mercury in *Magia*, he is naturally associated with thieving; and the treasures he procures consist of vanished, ill-gotten and accursed goods. Like Hermes, the messenger of the gods, he wanders widely over crags and dales; and like quicksilver he is difficult to constrain, hates to be tied and therefore dislikes pacts. Shakespeare's Ariel also fretted against the bonds which bound him to Prospero. 'Faust's' Ariel will give large sums to avoid making pacts, and will do so three times running to the same person. On the fourth occasion, however, he presents his bill. The signatory can obtain one of Ariel's small servants as a familiar spirit. If they are banned into a monstrance which has held the body of the Lord and stood upon an altar, the constraint thus exercised is very severe, and Ariel will pay huge sums to redeem them. Like the fiends who confided in 'Solomon' how he might get the better of them, Ariel, and indeed all the other Electors, confessed under pressure. But Ariel was the most expansive and also something of a braggart. Amongst other claims he declared that he had been so powerful during the Fall as to keep Adam and Eve for a full quarter of an hour under the curse of God, and they

had only been released by the Stake of Agla. 'Faust' immediately forced the informative fiend to reveal this potent formula. Too late now the latter repented of his blabbing. For the Stake of Agla deprived not only Ariel but all hellish spirits of power and drove them whither the magician would.

This curious anecdote about the Fall may be a piece of Kabbalistic or Talmudic lore, dragged in here for the sake of the formula. In a later portion of the manual a definitely Rabbinical element is present in the description of the snake-daimon Bazarachiel. In *Bereshith Rabbah*, the erstwhile archangel Sammael, chief of the Satans who had rebelled against the creation of man, determined to bring about the fall of Adam. He selected the serpent as the most suitable agent and took complete possession of his body, as an evil spirit takes possession of a demoniac. In this way he deceived Eve. In *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* the great white snake Bazarachiel, co-lord with the serpent Jazariel of the tribal spirits of the dead, and invoked for necromantic purposes, appears in the body of the snake which Satan borrowed to tempt Eve. This snake made the first pact with the devil, and the spirit of Bazarachiel still informs it, the greatest of all secrets and mysteries of God. Bazarachiel therefore is not a mere snake, but one of the most powerful spirits known to man. To subdue him with the sword of the spirit is to become omniscient, the master of all spirits and of all hidden treasure.

The reference to the tribal spirits of the departed shows that this flotsam of Jewish folk-lore was entangled with ancient beliefs in ancestor-worship, leading to necromancy and ghost-lore generally. And to the same hoary magical substratum of *Magia* belongs the notion of the propitiation of the subterranean gods underlying the processes given for summoning up the pygmies, who are here listed with the earth-spirits. This operation (for the two methods given are almost identical) was either modelled on an anecdote in Grimm's *Deutsche Sagen* (1816-1818) or taken from Prætorius, Grimm's seventeenth-century source, or from some cognate and perhaps more detailed description. It is impregnated with the folk-fancies which permeated Paracelsus' monograph *De Nymphis, Sylphis, Pygmeis et Salamandris*, and is indeed refreshing to meet after wading one's weary way through the magical morass of the tedious Faustian treatise. Heine was so much struck by

Grimm's tale that he copied it *verbatim* in *Elementargeister* and omitted to mention his source. One way and another therefore the invocation of the pygmies has had a good deal of publicity, and fully deserves it. In *Magia* it is one of the few redeeming features in a manual whose deadly dullness has to be experienced in order to be believed.

Emerging on a fine day in May or June on to a green hill where all the four points of the compass can be seen, you find a little wooden table spread for two and two little chairs drawn up to it. All the minute implements and dishes as well as the white cloth are brand-new and bought for this special occasion without haggling. And the fare is tempting to put it mildly: newly baked unleavened bread, virgin honey, rolls spread with fresh butter and sugar, creamy sugared milk, sweet Spanish or Hungarian wine, pure well-water. Post-war pygmies it is safe to assert would not tarry long before broaching this meal. But the incense burning in a brazier under the table must first be fed with the blood of a white hen or a white dove (the alternative process says black) and the severed halves of the sacrifice must be cast one to the east and the other to the west; the pygmies must then be suitably invoked and the magician must taste the food and wine himself before the pygmies will put in an appearance. When all this has been accomplished two little mannikins will approach, eat and drink from the vessels and read the petition prepared on virgin paper with blue ink. On this first occasion they will depart without having uttered or written a word. The next time they will speak and promise to serve the exorcist; in their third appearance they will bring the sign or bond of service. This will always summon them in the future, when they will bring anything that is wanted: gold, silver, and jewels, and all the more readily if one does not ask for them. They will also reveal the nature of plants and herbs and furnish the magician with game. If they are well treated, they will feel and show affection; but their secrets must never be revealed to a third person. They cannot bear cursing or any mention of the devil's name and they hate immorality and every kind of sin, for they are not evil spirits.

This idyllic passage, which Peuckert believes to be an expansion of four lines in the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, could never have been produced by the mind responsible for the main contents

of *Magia*. It must have been taken, although perhaps slightly modified, from some such source as the one used by Grimm in the following story:

There was at Nuremberg a man called Paul Creuz who made use of a wonderful conjuration. On a certain spot he placed a little table which was quite new, and a white cloth on it with two little bowls of milk, two little saucers of honey, two little plates and nine little knives. Then he took a black pullet and slaughtered it in such a way over a kitchen brazier that the blood mingled with the food. After that, he threw one half to the east and the other to the west. He then went and hid behind a big tree and saw that two little dwarfs who had come up out of the ground had seated themselves at the table and had eaten over the precious incense-burner which he had also placed there. Then he put questions to them to which they replied; and after several occasions they became so familiar with him, that they lived like guests in his house.<sup>1</sup>

I have called the pygmy-process one of the few redeeming features in *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*; for the confessions of the Electors have a certain interest; and there are lighter moments to be met with here and there in the manual which slightly leaven the indigestible lump. But the main purpose of the treatise is to communicate the processes proper to the invocation of the many and various spirits of the hierarchy, and these innumerable operations do indeed make hard and heavy reading, monotonous, repetitive and crammed full with ugly barbarous names.

The conjurations open, however, in grand style in A.1 which begins with a general summons to all the spirits in the descending hierarchy from Lucifer down to the four free spirits to appear and swear allegiance on the Book to the exorcist. This is, in fact, a concrete and practical version of the rite described in general terms by Pseudo-Agrippa. The whole infernal host being involved the sub-title *Harrowing of Hell* is amply justified and one is naturally prepared for very special efforts in the ceremonial line. Here, however, the Cabalist (as he is called and spelt throughout) lags sadly behind 'Solomon'. The preliminary preparations are reduced to a minimum, although the essential features are retained. The Cabalist must be well versed in reading and writing and well grounded in the Holy Scriptures. He must search his heart to

<sup>1</sup> J. Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen*, Berlin, 1816; I, p. 48.

make sure that the spirits are favourably inclined towards him,<sup>1</sup> and also to discover if he has committed any gross and criminal sins. He should go frequently to church and attend Holy Communion a few days before the operation; he should also keep himself chaste, avoid women, preserve a dignified demeanour, put on sweet-smelling clean clothes, keep his own counsel and choose a secret place for the operation.

The pomp and circumstance have vanished; the ceremonial garments have shrunk; the ritual purification devolves upon the laundry; abstinence is to seek. Nor need the Faustian exorcist possess that mastery in arts and crafts essential in the school of 'Solomon'. He must pay for what he needs without haggling, and that will see him through. The *Liber Spirituum* must be consecrated by a priest who should say three holy masses over it. The five candles necessary for this ceremony should be consecrated wax candles from an altar; but if these are unobtainable, a recipe is given as to how they may be fashioned by the Cabalist and consecrated by a pious prayer. Three different kinds of incense must also be prepared and consecrated (to attract the spirits, to punish recalcitrant spirits and when dismissing them). Fresh coal and a new brazier must be procured and consecrated too, and close attention paid to the triple circle made of paper or linen. The outer circle contains the Schemhamphoras; the first chapter of St John is inscribed on the second, and the names of the seven archangels if space permits; the third circle is furnished with certain appropriate texts from the Old and New Testament and, if there is room, with the names of the patriarchs and evangelists. The whole should be consecrated by a priest with holy water; or by the Cabalist, either with a dagger which has slain one or more persons, or with an executioner's sword which has beheaded several criminals. Strange alternatives; but no stranger certainly than the state of mind of the man who penned them.

Having reached his objective, cross-roads, between midnight and one o'clock, the Cabalist besprinkles the circle with holy water, lights the fire and consecrates it, and enters the circle holding the candles and the incense. Stepping with his right foot into the outermost circle, he pronounces the words: 'In the name of God

<sup>1</sup> This is done by Faust in Widman's Faustbook and in those deriving from it.

the Father'; stepping into the middle circle with his left foot, he says: 'In the name of God the Son'; and finally lands in the inner circle with both feet: 'In the name of God the Holy Ghost.' Crossing himself devoutly after these pious acrobatics, he proceeds to a series of prayers, the recitation of the first chapter of St John and the lighting of the candles. One is placed at each of the four points of the compass and the fifth is kept in the Cabalist's hand. The prayers are heart-felt outpourings and moving appeals for protection and assistance. One of them contains the phrase: 'As little as Christ Jesus, the Son of God, will ever be made flesh again, so little shalt thou, Satan, do any harm or hurt to this my person and circle'—a curious saving clause also found in other portions of the manual. After these acts of worship and propitiation, the so-called chief (and only) citation follows. Its outstanding feature is the enumeration of all the individual names in the thirteen categories of fiends invoked. They are summoned in a loud voice, whilst the Cabalist faces east, by the ten holy names of the Sephiroth, their numbers and angels, more or less as given in *Schemhamphoras*; then by hell, hell-fire and the torments and martyrdoms of hell; by Behemoth and Leviathan; by the Furies; by Cerberus; by the judges of the Underworld; by the four rivers of Hades; by the six authors of all evil (ACTEUS, MAGELESIUS, ORMENUS, LYCAS, NICON, MIMON);<sup>1</sup> finally by seventy-two holy names for Christ. They are enjoined to appear without servants, storms or thunder, peacefully and gently, in a friendly human form; to lay their fingers on the Book and pentacles and, in a loud voice, to repeat after the Cabalist the oath of allegiance without lies or deception. After having been shown a formula called the Stake of the All-Highest, and bound three times (each of them again individually by name) by the Trinity and the arch-angels, they are then materialized by the incense and take the oath:

We, Lucifer, and all beforementioned and following spirits, swear to you N., to Almighty God through Jesus Christ of Nazarus, the Crucified One, our conqueror, that we will faithfully perform everything written in this book; also never to do you any harm, either to your body or your soul, and to execute everything immediately and without refusing, as

<sup>1</sup> The Greek *Telechines* or *Alastores*.



truly as Jesus Christ was made flesh, and as truly as we believe that we may still attain to grace.<sup>1</sup>

The spirits in *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* were evidently disciples of Origen, who believed that the devil and his angels might be saved under the discipline of the future world, a view also expressed in the *Clementine Recognitions* and later rejected as extremely heretical. One can hardly blame the luckless fiends for clinging like their fellows in the *Lemegeton* to this slender hope, but one does not share their optimism. The oath having been taken, the Cabalist fumigates the demons with a different incense in order to dematerialize them; the formula of dismissal appropriate to the day is uttered; they are thanked, dismissed and told to go quietly, an injunction enforced by the mystical names of Mary. A prayer should be said before leaving the circle.

Unlike 'Solomon', 'Honorius' or the Karcist, 'Faust' was not driven by non-compliance on the part of the spirits to resort to blood-curdling threats. The opening invocation by Hell and its torments, by the Furies and other infernal powers was evidently menace enough; moreover the hope of salvation held out in the oath was a species of constraint by bribery. The prayers, like the preparations, were kept within reasonable bounds; and the magical formulae, consisting almost entirely of familiar and comprehensible Latin and Hebrew names, were not unduly burdensome. It was magic made relatively easy, except for the feat involved in mastering the names of the spirits of the hierarchy, recited in all four times. Fairly simple and well-planned, this particular rite is totally devoid of drama, being utterly and unrelievedly utilitarian.

True to that spirit it had communicated the text of a unilateral pact; and in that same spirit the so-called 'Faust' now proceeded to consider the question of the bilateral pact with which the name he bore had become inextricably associated. But how little the Faustian tradition appealed to the writer is shown by the entirely independent line he took in describing the process. He did not give the text of the pact, reproduced in all the Faustbooks, but left this to the discretion of the Cabalist, according to whether he wished to surrender his soul and body for gold or for magic

<sup>1</sup> J. Scheible, *Faust's Magic*, pp. 31 f. Following Kiesewetter, I take 'auflösen' to mean 'materialize', and the different incense used later to effect dematerialization.

arts; according to the number of points he wished to specify and the number of years he wished the contract to run. If gold were the object, Aciel must be summoned. 'My dear Mephistophilus', Jazariel or Marbuel would all do equally well if it were a question of magic arts. But first and foremost it was necessary to make the best of the bargain.

If you wish to make a pact with a hellish spirit, from which may God preserve you ('Faust' advised), you may do so by summoning any of the spirits in the manual according to his special ritual; but see to it that you leave a loop-hole open by frequenting God's table, so that you are in good odour when the time comes to renounce the pact; and carry Aaronroot and Christroot on your person, so that the spirit cannot possess you. Write down the articles of the agreement, stating the number of years during which the pact is to run; lay it outside the circle, cite the spirit and tell him to take the document to Lucifer, so that he and the spirit invoked may sign it. But beware of doing likewise yourself, until they have appended their signatures and have laid the promised money outside the circle. You must then surrender the document to them, making them swear by the Redeemer that they will observe all the articles of the agreement for the stated number of years. You for your part must also adhere faithfully to all the conditions, or it will be the worse for you.

Mental or spiritual reservations also played their part in the mind of the author of the *Grand Grimoire* as we have seen; but the Karcist signed his name before Lucifuge; nor did he, whilst selling his soul into eternal perdition, haunt God's table too. This is a peculiarly 'Faustian' refinement.

Considering the precautions taken, the subsequent process (of a later date probably, and Lutheran in tone) suggested itself automatically. By means of this operation, the magician can free himself from the consequences of the pact. The blood of a slaughtered firstling lamb with which to trace the magic circle is necessary for this rite. The first chapter of the Gospel of St John and various appropriate texts must be inscribed on the circle. Very submissive and repentant prayers to God must also be uttered; whereupon the spirit will be forced to return the pact, say and do what he will. The document must then be buried in a church for three years, at the expiration of which period the sorcerer's

soul will be safe, provided that he accept no further services from the spirit.

The legend of Theophilus may have suggested this rite; the Faustbooks took a diametrically opposite line, insisting from beginning to end that the hero was irretrievably doomed by the pact, and so much in the spirit's power as to be forced to sign a second contract when he began to repent of the first. Even the lachrymose laments of the folk-book Faust as his hour drew nigh seem almost noble when compared with this 'Faust's' hypocrisy, double-dealing and complete cynicism on the subject of scraps of paper.

These three processes: the mass-swearing on the *Liber Spirituum*, and the making and breaking of bilateral pacts, form the contents of A.1. The author of A.2 went into much greater detail, compiling in effect a Faustian Book of the Spirits, with their names, seals and characters, their confessions, the portraits of the Electors and many other spirits; and conjurations, bindings and dismissals appropriate to each member of the infernal hierarchy from Barbiel downwards. In spite of the occasional descriptions and the illustrations, the proceedings are on the whole of a monotony and dullness unparalleled elsewhere, consisting largely as they do of lists of grotesque names and being almost totally barren of dramatic let alone poetic or even human interest, until at long last one meets with the little pygmies. There is, however, one fairly outstanding exception to this general rule, the great wrestling-bout with Aciel.

As against two chapters each devoted to Apadiel and Anael, four to Ariel, five apiece to Barbiel and Mephistophiel and six to Marbuel, Aciel has fourteen. And small wonder. For he is to stand and deliver in fair human form a ton of gold and money, without harm or injury to the body, soul or spirit of the Cabalist, or to his circle and dwelling. He must speak in German and not deceive the exorcist with guile, with false money or dung; and if he comes with great tumult he must be brought to heel by means of a powerful spell. All this takes some doing as well as great frightfulness on the part of the operator. The hosts of hell must have shuddered to hear the doom awaiting them unless they dispatched Aciel forthwith at the Cabalist's command:

...otherwise, malicious devils, spirits and fallen angels all together, as many as dwell in the whole kingdom of hell under Lucifer and

Beelzebub, the divine words of power shall torment you seven times worse, martyr you, torture you, crush you, curse you and damn you; yes, and gnaw through and corrode your spiritual bodies with sulphur and pitch to all eternity and to the uttermost depths of earth and hell...<sup>1</sup>

Yet even with God's help this threat may not avail; for Aciel is a stubborn spirit and may need scourging. A blasting rod must therefore be at hand; instructions follow as to how to procure, prepare and inscribe it, and also how to scourge the air with it cross-wise within the circle. The spirit will probably now manifest near his seal, which has been placed well outside the circle; but he may come in an unwelcome guise, in which case he must be sternly dismissed and forced to appear in a pleasing human shape. He must then be made to swear by the cross not to deceive the Cabalist; and since he is an arch-deceiver, he must be constrained to make a confession of faith by his seal in the power of Christ on his knees before the crucifix, swearing solemnly in the name of Christ to keep his promise 'as truly as God shall help me again to happiness and glory'.<sup>2</sup> The scene thus sketched of the devil kneeling before the crucifix is unique in the rituals of black magic known to me. It is a fearful vision, since one is reminded immediately afterwards that the fiend and the cross are forced into juxtaposition in order that the Cabalist may make quite sure of the ton of gold.

Should Aciel allow the exorcist to dig for this himself, it must be fumigated in order to separate it from its guardian spirit and baptized with holy water in which a man-child (preferably a first-born) has been christened. There will probably be trouble in dismissing Aciel after the treasure has been obtained; it is also possible that he will be unwilling or unable to speak, in which case a formula must be read to obtain a written answer. The seal of Aciel, now surrendered to the Cabalist, will make the latter master of all treasures, of all the arts, of all languages and all secrets, including the knowledge of what anyone in the whole world is saying and doing. The lengthy and arduous ceremony has not been in vain.

Even in this relatively sensational ritual there is a notable absence of fear in the comments and instructions. 'Faust' gives the impression that he is the master of the spirits, and treats them in much the same manner as a lion-tamer hectoring ferocious big

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Faust's Magic*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 78f.

cats. He knows that they are dangerous, especially that sullen, snarling tiger Aciel, the star-turn of the act; but he relies on the menace of his voice and the cracking of his whip. He relies on something else too, naively and implicitly: on the power and might of God and His holy names; more than that, on divine protection and assistance. This piety is undoubtedly genuine in *Magia* and expressed with calm and confidence. So that here again the author betrays his divergence from the Faustbooks, whose hero renounced God when he made his infernal compact and was thereafter alternately a prey to remorse and a desperate but hardened sinner. The emotional and religious climate is utterly different in the legend and the ritual.

The same certainty of divine sanction makes itself felt in the necromantic process in B.1 in which the snake-daimons Jazariel and Bazarachiel mentioned earlier are invoked. 'Faust' instructs the Cabalist to reject any pact the ghost (raised to disgorge buried treasure) may proffer, with the announcement that the operator has already made a holy pact with Tetragrammaton at his baptism. This process, although it has a faint dramatic quality, is entirely devoid of the terror, eeriness, ghoulishness and gloom commonly distilled by necromantic rites, which were very generally execrated and thought by some to be impossible to implement unless a pact with the devil had previously been signed.

Even less alarming are the instructions also given in B.1 for ridding oneself of a *poltergeist*. Here again, as with the pygmies, the element of folk-lore is present. The obstreperous spirit must be swept out of the house through the skylight in the name of Asteroth, the Prince of the *poltergeists*, to the accompaniment of fumigations and prayers. This pleasing little ceremony shows a refreshing kindness of heart in stipulating that the spirit should be banished to an uninhabited area, so as not to disturb others; but that it should be given several square yards to house in, and birds and beasts to live on if the Creator permits.

Towards the end of A.2 and continuing throughout B.1 a whole series of magical secrets and experiments swells the already swollen text. The composition of *electrum magicum* heads the list. This priceless metal was manufactured by melting in the prescribed order and with due regard to the planetary aspects gold, silver, iron, copper, tin, mercury and lead, and mixing them

together. There are several methods indicated, and part of one of them tallies word for word with the process detailed in a delightful little magical handbook called *Magia Divina*, said to have been published in 1745. This collection of fascinating secrets is remarkable for including precise instructions for the chemical creation of male and female *homunculi* from human blood. *Magia Naturalis* has no such experiment to show, which at least goes to prove that 'Faust' was not gifted with foreknowledge of the second part of Goethe's dramatization of the legend. It also seems to suggest that he did not take the idea of *electrum magicum* from *Magia Divina*, leaving the *homunculi*, an even more exciting experiment, disregarded. The debt may therefore have been the other way round; or both manuals may have been drawing from Paracelsus as their source. In *Magia Divina* the bells made from *electrum magicum* are rung to summon angels; in *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* the spirits they evoke are not raised in order to converse angelically with the Cabalist, but for the sake of treasure trove. Balls made of this metal will also divine the presence of treasure, drive out all wicked spirits, ghosts and phantoms, make it impossible for anyone to delude or deceive the possessor, will keep magic away from him, cure possession, act as a mascot by land and sea, retrieve stolen goods and hasten the release of the dying.

Magic mirrors, crystals and crystal-gazing bulk very large in B.I. Mephistophiel significantly enough recommends the mirror more highly than the crystal, because the former can be used to ban Aciel, Ariel and Marbuel, and the latter will only bind two minor spirits and himself. The mirror, which shows all the treasures hidden in the earth, must be buried over a dead man's face, then at a cross-road and finally consecrated by a priest in orders and left on the altar for three successive Sundays, provided that no funeral ceremony intervenes. When the process is completed a dog or cat must be made to look into the mirror before the magician ventures to do so. A blackish aura hangs round these instructions; whereas the crystal-gazing experiments here as in other rituals tend on the whole towards white magic. Of a familiar type is the one in which a pure lad of about ten who has been born in wedlock looks into the stone whilst the Cabalist prays to St Helena, the mother of Constantine, who was said to have

rediscovered the cross of Christ. An angel then appears in the crystal. An oriental atmosphere is distilled from another process in which nine airy spirits are banned into a water-glass. Their king is commanded to fetch the royal throne and the golden book of Solomon the Wise. He must place the Cabalist on the throne and swear by the book to answer questions truthfully; but he must not be detained beyond the statutory hour and must be courteously entreated. A banquet should be offered him; and, if he accepts, his spirits should be dispatched to fetch rich meats and choice wines from some royal table. During the feast, the Cabalist and his apprentice should make sweet music. Although this recalls Faust's pranks in the Vatican and his exploit in the cellar of the Bishop of Salzburg, as well as the many magic banquets he presided over, the fetching of feasts by attendant spirits from other men's houses is too constant a feature of the legends about medieval magicians for one to be positive that it came into *Magia* from the Faustbooks.

The introduction of Solomon's name serves to draw attention to the great difference between *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* and the *Clavicles*. From the point of view of ritual solemnity, eloquence and drama, the Faustian ritual falls far indeed below the standard set by 'Solomon'. Ponderous, dry-as-dust, heavy with learning, its strictly utilitarian character was however an enormous asset in the eyes of those who believed in the efficacy of ritual. To have the General Conjunction for the hosts of hell in black and white; to have a *Liber Spirituum* replete with every possible detail; to have fool-proof instructions for the making and (better still) for the breaking of pacts; a necromantic process warranted to be harmless; good riddance to bad rubbish in the shape of *poltergeists*; *electrum magicum*, magic mirrors, the crystals, the water-glass and dozens of kindred secrets; not to mention a whole treatise devoted to diagrams of circles, pentacles and seals with instructions how, when and where to make them; one could hardly ask for more. And the beauty of nearly every one of the processes and secrets was that they would procure the Faustian Cabalist a sizeable fortune in the shape of buried treasure. Although decidedly weak on the astrological and alchemical side, *Magia* was as good as a portable library as far as conjurations went, and simply asked to be plundered.

(b) *Minor Faustian Rituals*

The sub-title, *Threefold Harrowing of Hell*, was a stroke of genius, whoever may have invented it first. Nearly all the magical manuals attributed to Faust, as well as many that were not, had *Harrowing of Hell* in some part or other of their ell-long titles. Among the former are to be descried two chips from the solid block of *Magia* which flew off to join an odd collection of pamphlets, nearly all of them purporting to have been written by Faust, issued from the Vatican. Two of these have Latin prefaces by Pope Alexander VI; a third has his *imprimatur*, and a fourth is sponsored by Julius II. The famous nigromancer Gerbert however (Pope Sylvester II) was never mentioned in these prefaces, although one of them pays a tribute to Sylvester I. Like the Papal Bull prefixed to the French *Constitution of Honorius*, this quaint device for selling Black Books was probably due to the two incompatible desires of making them seem respectable whilst also impressing clients with their magical potency. Confused notions of the miraculous power claimed by the priests of the Roman Catholic Church blending with dark legends of nigromancy practised on St Peter's stool accounted no doubt for this passion for papal patronage. Alexander VI had the reputation of being a black magician both in schismatic circles and among the Protestants. His name therefore would suggest itself almost automatically; and it is probably only a coincidence that the two manuals adorned with his preface are the two which derive from *Magia*. It is an amusing coincidence, however; for the hero of the Faustbooks was said to have visited the Vatican and snatched food and drink away from His Holiness. The real Faust probably lived from about 1480 to 1540; Alexander was Pope from 1492 to 1503; the two manuals in question were dated 1501; so that the dates actually overlap which is more than can generally be claimed for dates in magic. Other non-Faustian rituals were frequently ascribed to the Jesuits who occasionally sponsored Faustian texts, sometimes dated before the Society was founded. And here again no disrespect was intended to that body whose name was used in order to add prestige to the processes it was supposed to be advertising.

The two Vatican manuals which borrowed from *Magia* are



entitled (amongst other things) (A.) *D.I. Fausti dreyfacher Hoellen-Zwang* and (B.) *D. Faustus vierfacher Höllen-Zwang*. A. gives the names, seals and short character-sketches of the seven Grand Dukes AZIEL, ARIEL, MARBUEL, MEPHISTOPHILES, BARBUEL, AZIABEL, ANIQUIEL, without, however, assigning to them any planetary attributes. It is interesting because of the following quatrain:

Mundus ater cum illis  
 Me pactum dicit habere,  
 Sed me teque Deus  
 Te illo custodiat omnes.

D[octo]r I[ohannes] F[aust].<sup>1</sup>

This doubt thrown on Faust's pact with the devil is further strengthened by the advice to agree to nothing whatsoever the spirits suggest, since the words of power of Moses, Aaron and Solomon are quite sufficient to force the spirits to procure the treasures in the earth and sea. B. also enumerates seven Grand Dukes, AZIEL, ARIEL, MEPHISTOPHILES, MARBUEL, ANIGUEL, BARBUEL, ARIABEL, again without planetary attributes, and giving only one general seal and one general citation for all the spirits in the manual. The compiler seems also to have drawn on Wierus, for twenty-eight of the names of the eighty elemental spirits mentioned tally with those in *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*.

These dull little primers have no intrinsic interest; but the same can certainly not be said of the famous *Black Raven*, to give it its distinctive title, although among other boasts it also lays claim to be the *Threefold Harrowing of Hell*. Peuckert believes it to be a later version of a text entitled *Doctor Johannis Fausti Manual-Höllenzwang* which he is inclined to think is the *Urhöllenzwang*. His reasons are not very convincing; but I have not been able to see the handbook, and am in no position to judge. It was dated from Wittenberg in 1524 and is very similar to the *Black Raven* which purported to come from Lyons in 1469. The bird on the title-page was almost certainly copied from the black dove in *Magia*, and there are other signs of its debt to that great classic. Both the *Black Raven* and the *Manual* made a bee-line for the

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, p. 1133.

story of Faust's pact and tackled it firmly in the preamble, beginning with this versified warning:

Without a circle read me not out loud,  
 For then I spell great danger.  
 The spirit sure will have you cowed  
 If you're to power a stranger.  
 He will not let you answer no  
 When he a pact proposes,  
 But presses hard to have it so  
 If he a flaw discloses.  
 First draw my circle true and fair,  
 The *figures* duly mark,  
 And do all this with strictest care  
 E'er on conjuring you embark.<sup>1</sup>

In the practice of the art of magic, hope and fear were ever present: hope of the enormous benefits to be obtained, fear of the danger involved from angry or evil spirits. This had been so from the very beginning; and Christianity had added the fearful peril menacing the soul of the exorcist to the bodily harm he courted. From the earliest times protective measures had been used to avert disaster during magical operations: charms, spells, talismans, pentacles and above all the magic circle, a fortress against the besieging spirits. I have only found one mention of it in the Greek papyri, but it was of immemorial antiquity and unknown origin, absolutely essential in medieval and modern magic and demanding the greatest care and precision in the drawing. Terrible stories were current of the fearful fate overtaking those magicians who had made some mistake in the tracing of the circle, had left a loop-hole by which the spirits might enter, or who had inadvertently stepped over it during the invocations. The *Black Raven* made use of this piece of magical lore to explain away the awkward fact that the supposed originator of the processes in his handbook, warranted to be as safe as they were rewarding, should have been forced to forfeit his soul. Necessity being the mother of invention, he fabricated the following story in order to reassure his clients whilst procuring for his booklet the vogue which Faust's name on the title-page guaranteed.

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, pp. 853-4.

In the course of his reading, said the 'Faust' of the *Black Raven*, he had come across a book of conjurations for various spirits. He had begun to experiment with the invocations, not really believing in their power, when the mighty Astaroth suddenly appeared before him and asked him what he wanted. Without sufficient reflexion the magician mentioned several wishes, whereupon Astaroth countered by demanding a pact. Sorely flustered, 'Faust' tried to evade the issue; but, ill-protected by a carelessly-drawn circle, he was at the mercy of the fiend and was compelled to bargain his soul away for the personal service of Astaroth for a certain number of years. Astaroth, who ranked too high in the hierarchy to perform petty tasks, then set about procuring 'Faust' a familiar spirit:

After this had happened [the making of the pact] this spirit introduced MOCHIEL to me, as having been chosen to serve me. I asked him how quick he was Answer: As the wind. You shall not serve me, go back to where you came from. Then came ANIGUEL; he answered that he was as quick as a bird in the air. Nevertheless you are too slow, I answered; begone. In a moment the third spirit was also there before me, called AZIEL. I asked him how quick he was *As fast as the thoughts of men!* That's good enough for me, said I; I will have you. This spirit has now served me for many years.<sup>1</sup>

This is a body-blow for the legend. Astaroth, being traditionally mightier than Mephistopheles, might well be allowed to appear on the first dread occasion; but that Aziel should usurp Mephisto's rightful place as Faust's familiar spirit seems almost inexplicable at first sight. To be so well aware of the pact; to give a reassuring explanation of it, and then to alter it like this! It is all the odder because the author of the *Black Raven* (and evidently of the *Manual* too) had more knowledge of the legend than most of the other compilers of Faustian rituals show. The trial by speed (to be found in other connexions in folk-lore) was first told about Faust either in the 1589 edition of 'Spies' or in 'Hogel's *Erfurt Chronicle*' copied in the seventeenth century from a sixteenth-century manuscript. It did not occur in the conjuration-scene, but took place at a banquet at which the invited guests arrived and

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, p. 855. The *Manual Höllenzwang* gave the names as: MARBUEL, ANIGUEL and ACIEL.

were discouraged to find that no preparations had been made for the feast:

But he knocks with a knife on the table. Soon someone enters and says: 'Sir, what do you wish?' Faust asks, 'How quick are you?' The other answers: 'As an arrow.' 'No,' says Dr Faust, 'you shall not serve me. Go back to where you came from.' Then he knocks again, and when another servant enters and asks the same question, he says: 'How quick are you?' 'As the wind', says he. 'That is something', says Dr Faust, but sends him out again too. But when he knocked a third time, another entered and, when he asked the same question, said he was as quick as the thoughts of man. 'Good,' said Dr Faust, 'you'll do.'<sup>1</sup>

This story never caught on in the Faustbooks. Widman and those who trod in his footprints ignored it; and one can well see why. As it stands there is nothing supernatural or magical about it. The persons entering one after another were simply servants coached to play a part. But once the notion that they were devils arose, fiends appearing during the conjuration-scene, the possibilities lurking in the situation were realized to the full both on the popular stage and in the puppet-booths. It had a long history on the boards, undergoing innumerable modifications, amplifications and graduations, until Lessing spoiled the market by being too clever and far too serious. One thing, however, remained constant in all the variations: the last spirit and the quickest, the one whom Faust chose to serve him, was naturally, indeed inevitably, Mephistopheles. The audience would never have stood for anyone else.

How then did it come about that the ritualists could afford to fly in the face of tradition? It was because they were adhering to a much older one, which regarded Aziel (in line with the gospel according to *Magia*) as the supreme lord of treasure and gold, as the dark sun-daimon to whom all things were possible. Mephisto could not compete with that. His seal and character were given with those of the other Grand Dukes in the *Black Raven*: AZIEL, ARIEL, MARBUEL, MEPHISTOPHILIS, BARBUEL, AZIABEL,

<sup>1</sup> Palmer and More, op. cit. pp. 114f. This is taken from the *Erfurt Chronicle*; I have not been able to see the 1589 Spies Faustbook but various authorities declare that they are identical. The question of priority is incapable of solution.

ANIFEL; but only the first three of these were considered worthy of citations. This negligence went even further in the *Manual*, which enumerated only six Grand Dukes: ACIEL, ANIGUEL, MARBUEL, ACIABEL, MARBIEL, BARBIEL; and left Mephistopheles completely out in the cold.

In view of the importance these two handbooks attach to the story of Faust's bilateral pact and how he came to sign it, one naturally expects that the *Accord* printed under the rubric *Dr Faust's Last Testament* will be the text of this fatal agreement. Nothing of the kind. In spite of the phrase 'quick as the thoughts of man', and although the soul of the magician is not explicitly safeguarded, it is clearly a unilateral instrument, and is followed, moreover, by the ritual designed to procure such a compact:

## 1

Firstly LUCIFER you shall procure me two tons of ☉.

## 2

Said gold shall be valid everywhere, and all those to whom I give it shall use it to their advantage.

## 3

Said gold shall not be false, nor of any MATERIAL that can be cheapened or disappear or turn into coal or anything of that kind; but it shall be of a METAL which has been used by human hands and is valid in all places and countries.

## 4

All treasures shall be at my disposal, so that I have not to fetch them myself; but you shall procure them for me without any help or trouble on my part wherever I may want them.

## 5

You shall injure neither my body nor my limbs, nor attack my health; but maintain it without any human debility whatsoever until I have completed my allotted span.

## 6

You must be not only quick as the thoughts of man to transport me from one place to another, however far they may lie apart, but you must also make me acquainted with the language of every country, so that I can speak it perfectly, and further return me uninjured to my starting-place when I have sufficiently enjoyed myself.

† † †  
**MEPHISTOPHILIS**  
**SIEGEL<sup>†††</sup> ODER CHARAC**  
**TEUR**

**ZUM ZWANG**



**UND GEHORSAM**

Mephistopheles' Seal



## 7

You must procure me a ring, so that as soon as I put it on my finger I may become invisible and invincible.

## 8

You must teach me how to procure the UNIVERSAL MEDICINE and also its right use and power and also the weights, how much to give to any one person; this you must tell me and show me.

## 9

You must agree and promise to comply carefully with all these points; and if you neglect even the slightest, or are negligent in any way, then you shall have no peace from this Book all your days, nor shall any peace be granted you in all eternity.<sup>1</sup>

The reference to the Book (*Liber Spirituum*) clinches it. This is a unilateral pact, a more concrete and much more detailed version of the oath in *Magia*; it is called Faust's compact with the spirits and only shows a negative awareness of the facts given earlier about the agreement with Astaroth, by passing over the question of the magician's soul in silence. Such are the straits to which this writer was put in attempting to harmonize magic needs with magic deeds. By doing so he made it abundantly clear that the Faust of ritual was a greedy and seedy person indeed compared with the Faust of legend:

I, Johannes Faustus, Doctor, do hereby openly acknowledge with mine own hand in confirmation and by virtue of this deed: after having designed to speculate about the ELEMENTS, and neither having found sufficient skill in mine own head nor yet other men to instruct me, I have surrendered myself to the spirit here present and who calls himself MEPHOSTOPHILES, a servant of the infernal Prince of the Orient; and have chosen this said spirit to instruct me in such matters, who on his side has promised to be obedient and subservient to me in all things. Whilst I for my part promise and vow unto him that, after the expiration of twenty-four years from the date of this deed, he shall have full power to deal with me as he thinks fit at his own pleasure; to rule, command, govern and lead all that I have and am, whether body or soul, flesh or blood, goods or chattels. And hereupon I renounce all those

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, pp. 887 ff.



who live, and the whole heavenly host, and all human beings, and so it must be. In witness whereof I have signed this deed with mine own hand and in mine own blood...<sup>1</sup>

The gift of knowledge to be paid for by the renunciation of God and an eternity in hell is certainly on a very different plane from tons of gold, magic rings and universal medicine, quite apart from the fact that Lucifer is browbeaten into procuring them by the power of the Book and without any talk of compensation.

Besides the pact-ritual the *Black Raven* pandered to more trivial tastes by giving particular instructions for mantle-flights through the agency of Aziel. A similar process had been communicated by *Magia*, although the invocation was addressed to the air-spirit Adatiel, of whom a coloured portrait with a billowing blue mantle was given. The billowing mantle reappeared in black and white in the *Black Raven*, but without the spirit's head. The hero of the Faustbooks undertook several mantle-flights, but so did many other magicians of the period; this link between the legend and the rituals may or may not be a direct one therefore. Instructions for manufacturing a blasting rod seem to point back to *Magia*; and there is yet another interesting similarity with that manual. The author had occasionally annotated his text with skilful little puffs. The treasure-procuring process with the magic bell, for instance, had been tried weekly in 1670, he said, and several times successfully. Another proved experiment was the eviction of the spirits of the departed from the sites of buried treasures. 'Faust' had often allowed 'my famulus Wagner' to perform this feat. He also boasted of having paid the sum of two hundred *Reichsthaler* in Holland for a certain very powerful seal. There are numerous talismans reproduced in the *Black Raven* for money and treasure, for protection against evil spirits, for invisibility, for power against one's foes and for luck at cards and in all one's undertakings. Some of these are advertized as having been tested and in some instances procured by the famous necromancer and exorcist Johann Georg Schröpfer (1730-74) whom we shall meet again. In fact, the copy published by Horst in his *Zauberbibliothek* in 1821 and reproduced by Scheible in *Das Kloster*

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, pp. 950f., from the first Spies Faustbook, 1587. This text was rather watered down by Widman in 1599, but remained substantially the same.

in 1846 was annotated by Schröpfer himself. Or so both Horst and Scheible believed, although they said nothing about the handwriting. The author of the notes (whether Schröpfer or another) claimed to have paid fabulous sums for certain seals and talismans, and owned that a batch of four procured in Holland had cost him eight thousand ducats. He vouched in footnotes for their efficacy, especially in the matter of hidden treasure. Although there is no knowing and no telling in matters of magic, the reappearance of Holland looks fishy to me; and whether Schröpfer or some enterprising salesman was responsible for the notes, *Magia* probably suggested the idea of adding them to the text.

The business-like tone in the body of the manual and the unilateral pact are in harmony with the Faustian classic, as well as the important part assigned to Azriel. In a conversation between 'Faust' and the fiend, the magician is told that if Azriel is to be forced to keep his word, he must be made to promise and swear by the cross and then to deliver up his sign. This is the same process as in *Magia*. On the other hand the body of the work shows little if any trace of a religious spirit; and the usual advice about purity and piety is whittled down to counsels to confess and partake of communion before the operation and to be well provided with prayers. But the uneasiness shown in the concluding portion of these instructions is in marked contrast with the self-confidence and self-righteousness of *Magia*:

...all this I bestow upon you, my poor, needy neighbour, and keep everything that is in this book hidden; and for any sake do not reveal it to anyone for nothing, otherwise you will have no luck; and use what you receive from him to whom you give it in order to help your poor and needy neighbour in his need, otherwise you will be unlucky and ill-starred. Let this serve you as a perpetual warning, for you will never again receive in this world the knowledge I am now about to communicate to you. Be sure to use it rightly, I warn you, reveal it to none who is not worthy of it, otherwise your neck will be broken, if you show it to some vainglorious person and do not use the money he gives you to bestow upon your poor and needy neighbour. Keep it secret and at the same time beware of *pacts* with the spirits, so that you may not be brought to the pass to which I am bound to come.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, p. 856.

Less ambiguous advice to take the cash and let the secrets go could hardly be given. This is something like real fear, inspired by a bad conscience which the smoke-screen of charitable intentions does not conceal. These latter were totally absent from *Magia*; and the hero of the Faustbooks, though a boon companion and a generous host, never troubled his head about the poor, and could be exceedingly spiteful to the humble. The talk about charity in the *Black Raven* was a species of fire-insurance against the future, and seems to have been due to genuine alarm about the pact. Here therefore the author, calling himself 'Faust', showed a state of mind comparable to the attitude of the first biographer of that magician, an attitude not discernible in the main body of the manual, as witness the unilateral pact; so that the opening portion was probably by another hand.

In the strongest possible contrast is the so-called *Key to Faust's Threefold Harrowing of Hell*, which Horst advertized as a *Key to the Black Raven*. His mind misgave him when it came to publishing it, but Scheible was less squeamish and printed it immediately after the manual in question. It is in no organic connexion with it, and is obviously not by the same author. A confusing preface by 'Faust' seems to be saying that, although any one of the seven printed books of conjurations which he will leave behind him will guarantee the possessor as much gold, silver and jewels as he will find there designated, he must nevertheless condense the power and words of his 'big book', so that they can be read or recited by heart in three times three hours; he must also carefully consecrate the circle together with the silver tripod and the names, words and letters surrounding it, and perform the ceremony in a suitable place, where no one will disturb him. This preface is said to have been printed in 1575 and 'extracted' in 1738. The whole contains a General Conjuration, a list of Usiel and his princes, and a Special Conjuration, consisting of weird names, for the said Usiel.

The General Conjuration obviously belongs to a class of invocations of which the *Christopheles-Prayer* is the best-known representative, an interminable, hysterical and maddeningly repetitive series of prayers and conjurations which could I think only have emanated from a German brain. Its aim is to persuade St Christopher to send a spirit with 99,000 ducats of good, current,

valid money to the exorcist. The spirit is to come in a fair human form without terrifying noises or any other kind of frightfulness, and without injury to the body and soul of the sorcerer in the circle. The opening instructions include advice to ask for too much rather than for too little, to propose an uneven sum, and to refuse to take 'no' for an answer. The magician must also promise to be charitable with the money and to put it to pious uses, or death within the year will be the result. The long-windedness, the volubility, the whining insistence on the poverty and the wretchedness of the exorcist are indescribable; but even worse is the violence, not to say the brutality, of the pressure brought to bear on the Trinity, on the Virgin Mary and on the Saint to fulfil the request of the magician. The whole legend of St Christopher is recapitulated step by step in the form of a conjuration; every single detail of the martyrdom of Christ is put to the same purpose, and repeated over and over again until one sickens of them. The liver and tongue of Solomon are invoked as well; *Pater Nosters*, *Aves* and *Credos* by the score are strewn in between these frantic adjurations. But it is the ruthless and ever-recurrent emphasis on the sum, the whole sum and nothing but the sum which surrounds this nauseatingly pious and shockingly grasping ritual with such an aura of evil. A *Gregorius-Prayer* and a *Veronica-Prayer*, mentioned by Kiesewetter and evidently on the same lines, show how popular such methods of extortion were in Germany.

The General Conjuration in the *Key* follows the same procedure, but goes much further and the reader fares far worse, as the writer hardly seems to be sane. For, if all books of ceremonial magic are nonsense-books, and if some of them seem to have been written for persons of arrested development, whilst others are addressed to moral delinquents (most of them highly religious), the ravings of the *Key* could surely never be uttered outside a padded cell. Not that the aim is in itself remarkable. Lucifer and Seloth are invoked to appear before the circle (called throughout *meftiafractus*) in fair human form, without tumult or noise, and without injury to the body or soul of the exorcist, and to bring with them gold and silver to the value of seventeen hundredweight of oriental gold valid everywhere. The megalomaniacal claim that the exorcist is invoking and desiring what no one has yet desired or been capable of conceiving would certainly not be allowed by any

student of the books of ceremonial magic; since nearly all of them, especially those written in German, had big ideas about money. But this is only a straw fluttering in the wind of madness raging in these incantations, which invoke the three members of the Trinity, the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, the Guardian Angel of the exorcist too (who must have been petrified at these proceedings, and was indifferently addressed as *Angelos Gustos* and *Custos*), St Christopher with special reference to his legend, and the four Evangelists, each separately by name. Then the middle spirits were called upon for co-operation. As their eventual fate of salvation or damnation still hung in the balance, it might be favourably influenced by obedience to the exorcist. Finally Lucifer and Seloth came in for truly maniacal menaces and hair-raising imprecations, as promised in the subtitle, *Imprecationes Fausti*. A Stygian darkness of the mind hangs over the whole; and although truculence and bluster towards the evil spirits is a characteristic of many black rituals and went further in some of the German variety than in those of France and England, few if any ever attained to the vehemence of the *Key*. Even worse, and peculiar to this most unpleasing of Black Books is the mixture of fawning and bullying in the prayers to the divinity, whose very power is called into question, should He not fulfil the exorcist's will:

...if you are an almighty and omnipotent God, then prove your almightiness now...and show yourself as a father and not as a destroyer; therefore I bind you, oh most holy Trinity, through the blood shed by Jesus Christ, and through His most holy merit, if you have the strength—of a living God....In the name of Jesus Christ, if you are a living God, oh Jehovah, then conquer now the power of hell. O living God! If the blood of Jesus Christ is valid in your eyes as a hope and a boon to all men; then, O hellish spirit, must you be forced by that power to give what I desire. If, O most holy Trinity, you are almighty, then show your power here and now; so that you, O might of hell, may now be forced through the might of the most holy Trinity to surrender what I demand....I hold you to it, most holy Trinity, through your might and power, to fulfil our desires in your name, forced and bound to do so by Jesus Christ...for did not Jesus speak and assure us, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He would grant their request? Here we are, living God, gathered together in your name...who promised that if we had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you would not forsake us....

I conjure you [SELOTH] by the liver and tongue of the eternal God. . . I conjure you, SELOTH, by the tongue, liver and heart of the most holy Godhead J. Chr. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Comment is superfluous; although perhaps, in fairness to the author, it should be emphasized that the French 'Honorius' invoked the King of the North among other things 'by the lungs, the heart, the hair, the inward parts, and by all the members of our Saviour Jesus Christ'.<sup>2</sup>

Although nothing quite so bad as the *Key* remains to be faced, the comparative innocence of *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* and the *Black Raven* will also not be met with again; for all the writers of the remaining rituals knew that they were playing with fire, or more truly perhaps that they were touching pitch. This knowledge of good and evil is apparent in *Doctor Faust's grosser und gewaltiger Höllenzwang*, purporting to come from a Jesuit College in Prague in 1509, or (in another copy) from Paris in 1508. That the Society of Jesus was not founded until 1534 was not the kind of fact to which Black Book compilers ever paid much attention. This manual existed in manuscript in the seventeenth century and certainly owed a debt to the *Black Raven* and possibly to *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* too. For the spirit invoked is once more Aziel, that famous lord of gold; and the pact-consciousness which is present in both the other rituals is also evident in this. The author warns the exorcist in the introduction that Aziel will try to cajole him to sign away his soul with his own blood. This last detail may have been inspired by the Faustbooks; it does not appear elsewhere in the Faustian rituals. There is no need, however, to undertake any such desperate step. The power in the words of conjuration is such that the spirit will be forced to obey the magician in fear and trembling and without harming his body or soul. The latter must fast three days before the operation, pray, give alms, confess himself, communicate and do other good and pious works. He should have three Masses read to the Holy Ghost and get a priest to bless the circle and the manual every time they are used. He should also wear a holy particle (pentacle) on his

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, pp. 899-928 gives the whole interminable conjuration from which these extracts are taken.

<sup>2</sup> There was probably a direct connexion between the *Constitution of Honorius*, the *Christopheles-Prayer* and the *Key*.

breast. The spirit must be commanded to appear in the fair form of a boy of twelve. Everything must be done to the glory of God; part of the riches obtained must be given to the poor, to the churches and the schools, otherwise the wealth will bring the exorcist eternal torments instead of pleasure. The notion of hush-money crossed by conscience-money shows the influence of the *Black Raven*. Aziel's seal, the consecration of the circle by a weird mixture of tongues, a prayer to God to be propitious, and a list of the times and aspects for invoking the spirit bring the preliminary matter to a close, during which Christ is petitioned to insert his cross into any gap that might inadvertently have been left in the ceremonial circle.

The actual proceedings then open with a fervent prayer to God to stand by the exorcist and protect him by the constraining power of His mighty names over His arch-enemy Lucifer. The conjurations then begin. Inordinate length is their outstanding characteristic. They are also violently abusive; and contain, besides long lists of holy names, a great deal of unintelligible polyglot gibberish. In fact, if pact-consciousness is often present in the minor Faustian Black Books, verbosity is a constant feature, abusiveness another; and barbarously mangled, thrice-mutilated names, although a stock feature of all magical rituals, form a positive jungle in most of the German efforts. The preparations it is true have been whittled down in the majority of cases to the barest minimum; but what is lost on the swings of ceremonial is gained on the roundabouts of conjurations and prayers. If magicians of the school of 'Solomon' had to be expert craftsmen, those of the school of 'Faust' would need to possess abnormally strong vocal chords; since most of the invocations, filling pages, had to be repeated three times. The Prague *Harrowing of Hell* is a case in point. *Doctor Faustens dreyfacher Hoellenzwang*, sponsored by a Bishop Albrecht and dated from Passau in 1407, is even worse in this respect. It is a monstrously swollen version of the Prague ritual, with lengthy invocations to the angels of the seven days and twenty-one citations as well as seven chief citations of the spirit Ariel. In both these manuals the threats to the fiends are ferocious and often palpably absurd. In *Prague* Lucifer is menaced amongst other horrors with an unendurable addition to his torments, from now onwards through all eternity and beyond,

unless he dispatches Aziel at once to the exorcist. Aziel himself, cited separately at great length and conjured by gibberish to be read backwards and forwards, is presumed, after this prolonged war of nerves, now to appear outside the circle.

## MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT

Here I am. What do you want of me, that you demand me thus? What is your desire?

N.B. Do not answer this question, but speak after this fashion:

I, N., created in the likeness of God, conjure you by the sacred names of God: Tetragrammaton, Adonai, Agla, Jesus Christ; give honour to God and say who you are. If he says, I am called as you named me, do not believe him. For other spirits disguise themselves in order to hinder you. But conjure him a second and a third time. When he says: It is I, receive him quickly. The spirits who have not been summoned only answer once.<sup>1</sup>

This anxious scrutiny of the identity of the spirit was probably inspired by the story in the *Black Raven* about Astaroth and the pact forced upon Faust. *Passau* gives much the same warning about spirits who have not been summoned appearing to the detriment of the undertaking; and later urges careful observation of the zodiacal signs upon his clients. Faust, it is true, had no need to do this; but that was because he had a pact with the spirits, which must be avoided at all costs. Aziel, the real Aziel, now appears before the *Prague* exorcist and asks him what he wants. The answer must be that the magician's chief desire is the grace and mercy of God; but that the fiend is to deliver immediately 299,000 ducats in current gold incapable of transformation. Aziel will refuse stubbornly and will demand something in return. Nothing whatever must be conceded, and the spirit must be threatened with more citations. When the money is there, he must be dismissed with stern prohibitions against any uproar, evil smell or injury to the circle and those inside it. It is clear from the omission of the real aim of the exorcist from the prayers that the author was not quite easy in his mind about the approval of the Trinity whose names were so ruthlessly racked for the sake of 299,000 ducats; and the fear of the spirit and of the pact is also obvious.

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, p. 832.



Neither *Prague* nor *Passau* mentions the name of Mephistopheles. *Prague*, concentrating solely on Aziel, may be forgiven for this omission. It is not so easy to pardon *Passau*, which, whilst citing Ariel, makes mention also of Arziel (?Aziel), Aziabel, Baruel and Astaroth, and leaves Faust's familiar spirit to languish in limbo.

Even less affected by current notions of Faust is *D. Joh. Faust's Geister und Höllenzwang*, without place or date. This conjuration of Astaroth, Berith and Beelzebub to produce ten hundred thousand *Gulden* is different in lay-out from the general run of rituals. Partly in Latin and partly in German, and positively bristling with names, it is more monotonous in the repetitive citations than any other manual I know. If, after pages and pages of these invocations, the spirits should still refuse to come, their names must be trampled underfoot, which will cause them unendurable anguish. Should they then, however, consent to obey, the torments can be assuaged:

Now, you obliging spirits and princes, Astaroth, Berith and Beelzebub, who have been cursed and excommunicated through the power and the might and the virtue of Almighty God your creator, by His authority I absolve you from all curses, martyrdoms and anguish that I, as a creature of God, brought upon you; and through His might, power and virtue I am enabled to place you again in your previous state of being, because you have been subject in obedience to God's holy name and my desire. The peace of God between us and Astaroth, Berith and Beelzebub and all your companions.<sup>1</sup>

Unhappily for all concerned the trampling underfoot of the names of the fiends by the magician and his assistants may not be enough; the endless citations must be resumed in that case, and a ritual burning of the names finally undertaken; after which, when the spirits put in their tardy appearance, no absolution like the above is pronounced, but the sum of money is immediately demanded. They are then dismissed and told to leave without injury to any living thing: 'neither my companions, nor any Christian soul, nor the leaves nor the grass, nor anything that hovers in the air.' This has been a constant refrain throughout, and brings a whiff of country air into an atmosphere heavy with magical jargon and gibberish. Perhaps the seemingly illiterate

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Doctor Faust's Bücherschatz*, Stuttgart, 1851, p. 360.

author was a countryman. For at the end of this ritual which would be staggering by its length, if it were not stultifying by its monotony, he says placatingly that it must cause trouble, labour and pains, like any other great undertaking:

For as the wheat, when it has been sown, needs sun and rain, so too good works need great pain and labour to prosper.<sup>1</sup>

The name of Berith may have been taken from *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*, where it figures as Beherit in the same category as Astaroth and Beelzebub; or it may come from Wierus' *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* where it has the same form as here. Certainly *Doctor Faust's grosser und gewaltiger Meergeist*, Amsterdam, 1692, drew from that source.

This famous ritual, of which Heine said that one hardly dared mention its name in a whisper, gave Faust some prominence in the preamble. He was declared to be 'the greatest nigromancer of his age'; and was emphatically stated, in defiance of rumours to the contrary, to have made a pact with Beelzebub for thirty-eight years. The latter had allowed Mephistopheles to serve him; and all this is amply testified to, said the writer, by the magical books Faust has left behind him, which are still yielding excellent results. They are for the most part to be found in monasteries, which have grown rich through their means. But sometimes a copyist can be persuaded to transcribe them, and thus they come into the hands of the people. Far and away the best of these manuals is *Der grosse und gewaltige Höllenzwang*, of which a new edition has just been issued at Prague. The editor is obviously a very learned magus, thoroughly grounded in the oriental languages. This handsome tribute shows that the ritual I refer to as *Prague* was enjoying a great vogue at the time, that is to say at the end of the seventeenth century, and also that the date, 1508, was quite as spurious as it seems. The writer of the manual now under consideration then proceeded to cry up his own wares (the true and authentic *Sea-Spirit*) as still more rewarding but not so difficult. Originally written by Faust in Latin, and bequeathed to his faithful servant Werner (for Wagner) when he departed this life, it was mislaid owing to the latter's negligence, passed from one hand to another, and was finally buried in 1532 by a man who had acquired

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Doctor Faust's Bücherschatz*, p. 379.

great wealth from it. Fate ordained that it should be brought to light again in 1661, and now, in the year 1692, it was being published in full, as it well deserved to be, for it was by far the most lucrative and the least complicated, although also the most dangerous nigromantic work in existence.

As was the case in *Magia* (A.1) the ritual sets out to conjure up the whole infernal host, although without the aid of a *Liber Spirituum* or any long list of names. Instead of this, there is a dramatic description of the manifestation of the spirits. Lucifer appears in a monstrous shape surrounded by the sea aflame with sulphur and belching out blue and green fire from his nostrils, from which seven-headed serpents emerge and threaten to attack the exorcist and his assistants. Although such a spectacle is calculated to unnerve them, they will escape all harm if only they obey the accompanying instructions:

If one is confident that one has acknowledged and repented one's misdeeds; if one has taken the firm resolve to walk in the path of virtue from now onwards, then, despite all the attacks which the spirits will make, despite all the illusions and obstacles they will put in one's way, one can boldly proceed with the work of summoning Lucifer and his three sea-spirits who are called: Forneus, who will appear as a sea-monster, Vepar, like a siren, and Zaleus, like a crocodile. They will all come teeming forth surrounded by many millions of spirits in monstrous shapes, black, with snakes for hair and tongues of fire, terrifying to behold. One can now demand of Lucifer as much gold and silver and jewels or any other useful treasure which lies in the sea, grows in the sea or has been cast into the depths of the sea by shipwreck, as one likes. He will immediately command his sea-spirits to go and fetch it. They now with all their black attendant spirits pass through the ocean and all the waters of the earth, and one spirit alone, Paymon, remains behind to attend Lucifer. What a roaring on the sea or in the waters; what a thundering and lightning in the air; and what a howling and wailing among the sea-monsters and the creatures in the waters will then be heard! For these also tremble at the obedience of the hellish spirits who rush with lightning speed to perform their master's orders. The whole journey takes three minutes.<sup>1</sup>

But Lucifer has to reckon with the protests of Forneus who returns with a treasure of Arabian ducats, shipwrecked near Smyrna two hundred and thirty years ago. What, give them to

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, pp. 1142f.

mortals, who are always threatening Lucifer's palace with the words of their Lord? Never. But Lucifer acknowledges that the exorcists have God on their side, and that he must therefore obey them. He rewards Forneus by making him Lord High Treasurer, Vepar, arriving with a whole shipload of jewels, is made Chief Jeweller, and Zaleus Treasurer of Silver at Lucifer's court. All the spirits now disappear except Lucifer and Amaymon, who transform themselves into the likeness of handsome men, habited as Persian merchants. Lucifer, addressing the exorcist sternly, asks why there are only four of them, seven souls being necessary, if they wish for gold and diamonds. To this rather strange question there comes an even stranger answer:

Four human beings, reconciled through the blood of Jesus, who has deprived you of your power over us, make four souls. You, Lucifer, you rebellious angel of God and your servant Amaymon, are two spirits; and this black cock has a soul too. That makes seven.<sup>1</sup>

After this answer, some powerful gibberish and some brutal threats, Lucifer will yield up the booty in rage and wrath, and offer more. No answer must be made to this proposal, against which magicians are frequently warned in other rituals as a devilish trap. On the contrary, the arch-fiend and his associates are now dismissed with a formula in a confusion of tongues, Russian amongst them, which is a mutilated version of 'Get thee behind me, Satan'.

The black cock, opportunely present, was probably a reminiscence of blood sacrifices. More interesting still is the fact that all the spirits mentioned by name are to be found in *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, with the following characteristics:

AMAYMON, King of the east....

PAYMON, is more obedient to *Lucifer* than other kings are.

*Lucifer* is here to be understood as he that is drowned in the depths of his knowledge....

FORNEUS, is a great marquis, like unto a monster of the sea....

VEPAR, a great duke and a strong, he is like a siren, he is the guide of the waters and of ships laden with armour....

ZALEOS is a great earl, he appears as a gallant soldier riding on a crocodile...<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, p. 1145.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wierus, op. cit. pp. 653, 655, 657, 663 for these details.

We are obviously in the realms of fantasy in the above description of a lurid seascape, strange sea-monsters, and treasures recalling the *Arabian Nights*. Could anyone take it seriously? Most readers of this manual dismiss it as mere spoof; but if the author let his imagination bolt with him at the beginning, he sobered down considerably as he went on to give the particular instructions:

Four allied persons are necessary to conjure Lucifer to yield up jewels from the sea and the waters. Purity, virtue and obedience must be their aim for their future way of life. Fasting therefore and prayer, repentance for their misdeeds, confession of the same to a priest, who must say four holy masses for them, abstinence from women and from gluttony, and strengthening of their purpose through medicaments, these must be the observances of these four persons.

Outwardly they must be dressed as follows. The first must wear a black robe, to show that sin has blackened them and made of them children of hell. The second must be clothed in red, to signify that their sins are blood-red. The third must be robed in white as a sign that, as they have returned to God, their blood-red sins have become snow-white. The exorcist finally, in the middle of the triangle, must wear a blue robe, by which the grace of heaven is indicated.

#### CONSTRUCTION OF THE CIRCLE

(A diagram is given)

The circle must be of good lead, on which the prescribed names must be beaten with the words: 'Strengthened against all evil spirits and devils'; these words must be uttered at each stroke. The triangle must be laid in it later and is to be made thus: Take three chains from a gallows, and nails from a wheel which have been hammered through the head of a man broken on the wheel. Weld them together on the night of Good Friday between eleven and twelve, saying with every stroke: 'Peter, bind it!' and go on hammering until it attains the size of a triangle in which four persons can turn about, and weld it together with copper. When the circle is ready, which must have three ells in diameter, and the holy work of conjuration is about to begin, lay it down near water, six ells distant from it, sprinkle the place with holy water and shake glowing coals, salt and incense upon it; change your shoes, and you who are only witnesses of the proceedings, step on to the angles of the triangle in such a fashion that the one in black stands on the angle marked b., the one in red on c., and the one in white on d. And let each have a waxen candle which has burned by the bier of a corpse and

been subsequently blessed by a priest in the right hand, and a dagger in the left. But the exorcist must lay a piece of lime-wood, also triangular in shape, into the middle of the triangle, and must step on to it bare-foot, after having put on a leathern cap, and having girt his loins with the cloth used by an executioner to wipe his sword after having beheaded some poor criminal.<sup>1</sup>

The ghoulish nature of these preparations postulates association of some sort with the common executioner, and would be more suitable for an experiment in necromancy than in nigromancy. These instructions tend to enhance the sensational nature of the rite, and put one in mind of tales of horror. Far indeed seem the days of 'Solomon', clad in garments woven by a virgin maiden. And the fearful character of the whole operation is stressed in the final injunction:

When you now have the gold and the jewels and Lucifer has gone, thank God with the psalm: 'Give praise unto the Lord, for He is good', and then leave the circle which you must throw into the water with everything else.

Go with your riches into another land.

Remain pious and give to the poor and to monasteries.<sup>2</sup>

Piety wedded to cupboard-love informs the invocations and prayers which are no negligible feature of *Sea-Spirit*. The reverend spiritual acrobatics performed before the Trinity almost deserved to succeed. For the prayers were seemingly genuine expressions of contrition and repentance and piteous pleas for divine forgiveness. But in the dual vision of the worshippers, the poverty from which they were also praying to be relieved was a sign of their wickedness and of the wrath of God. In imploring pardon for their sins they were at the same time expressly begging for money as a sign of divine grace, and as a means to reform their ways. Christ was reminded of his summons: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden', but naturally enough nothing was said about Lazarus and Dives. It was also insinuated that the sinners would be able to praise and glorify Christ much more heartily, if they were delivered from want; and the Holy Ghost

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, pp. 1145-47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. v, p. 1156.

was humbly besought to guide the exorcist and his assistants where their souls might be at rest, that is to say into the lap of luxury.

Although the beggar's whine jars the ear in these petitions, focussing one's attention on the flagrant abuse of prayer which characterizes this and kindred German rituals, a moment's reflexion shows that all ceremonial magicians are tarred with the same brush, and also that their fundamental assumptions are in agreement with those of the writers of litanies, mass-books and prayer-books. To pray for rain, for health, peace, prosperity, victory in battle (entailing the downfall of foes) is still considered legitimate in Christian churches to-day; and although money, especially such big money as the sorcerers were after, is never mentioned, the word prosperity covers it; and to a devout Christian it certainly figures as one of the many boons of God, from whom all blessings flow. The difference is in the kind of pressure applied to obtain a favourable hearing; and in much uglier and more brutal language, such rituals as the *Christopheles-Prayer*, the *Key to the Black Raven* and the adjurations in *Sea-Spirit* betray the same sort of concentrated energy on the purpose in hand as is to be found in the Greek papyri, a fierce direction of the will towards the god-head. *Sea-Spirit*, however, introduces an element of bribery as we have seen. And so did that exalted religious poet, the 'seraphic' Klopstock, who offered much the same terms to God as the ritualist for the love of the maiden called Fanny:

Loved by her, I will more burningly yet

Laud and extol thee.....

And will sing the Mediator's praise yet more sublimely,

he promised, and Lessing commented acidly: 'What audacity, to beg for a woman so earnestly!' Let that be the epitaph of the importunate exorcists.

The conjurations in *Sea-Spirit* are even more frantic than the prayers. By way of invocation a curse is pronounced upon Lucifer, filled with such fearful maledictions, imprecations and appalling threats, that it is the greatest relief to skip the gibberish which interlards it and slightly shortens the too numerous pages devoted to the curse. But here again, although the Germans were apt to go to extremes, most of the other rituals took the same line.

They were generally based on a species of blackmail: attempts to extort by threats, founded on inside information of the private life of the spirits, the boons which the exorcist required. Venus was threatened in the papyri with dreadful injuries to Adonis; Selene was to be defamed; in the Faustian rituals and other modern texts, Lucifer and the fiends were menaced with a fearful increase of already unendurable torments unless they disgorged the treasures demanded. Like all forms of blackmail it was dangerous, as the victim might turn and rend the operator; but by using the power latent in the holy names of God, the peril might be avoided. It is not a pretty picture presented by the magician in *Sea-Spirit*, as he cringes abjectly and fawningly before God whilst viciously snarling out threats and abuse at the fallen Son of the Morning. But then those who want to look at pretty pictures should not study the rituals of ceremonial magic.

Yet oddly enough, this particular manual is the only one among all the Faustian rituals I have seen in which creative imagination plays a recognizable part, and aesthetic disinterestedness is in evidence. The purpose behind the description of Lucifer and his train was almost certainly utilitarian, a natural desire to sell the book by making it thoroughly exciting. But no best-seller (or so the publishers say) has ever yet been produced with the author's tongue in his cheek. In this case a highly coloured, melodramatic imagination obviously took control for the space of a page or two. Art was struggling out of the swaddling-clothes of ritual. The impetus came from the *Lemegeton* probably through Wierus' *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, four of whose fiends came into brief but spectacular prominence in this highly-coloured rite.

The inspiration, such as it was, did not emanate from Faust; he played here the part to which most of the Faustian ritual-writers relegated him, that of passive patron-saint. Mephistopheles does not appear during the ceremony, and no kind of pact-consciousness conditions the proceedings. Except for the introduction, which is full of errors, this much publicized Black Book has nothing whatsoever in common with the presumptive author, whom one has almost ceased from searching for in the manuals which bear his name. This defeatism, however, is slightly overcome by the handbook called *Fausti Höllenzwang*, dated from



Wittenberg in 1540, which Scheible said that he printed from a sixteenth century manuscript, and which opens with this address:

GREETINGS FROM ME, FAUSTE, TO ALL MAGI!

If you wish to become true magi and perform my deeds, you must have knowledge of God as well as of other creatures, but you must not honour him in any fashion but what pleases the Princes of the World. If you cannot do this, then refrain from my writings; otherwise you will suffer deadly punishments from the spirits for your forwardness.

My reader, I write to you shortly but clearly. But what I say to one, I say to all: he who wishes to practise my art, let him love the spirits of hell and those who reign in the air; for these alone are they who can make us happy in this life; and he who would have wisdom must seek it from the devil.

For what thing in the world is there whose best exponent is not the devil, who is the Prince of the World?

In a word, ask what you will: riches, honour and glory, you can have them through him, and what you expect of good after your death, in that you deceive yourself.

I therefore warn you again, my reader, whoever you may be, if you venture to approach my posthumous works, consider the beginning and the end; for if you do not understand what you are at, then abandon your meddling; for you will only attract great misfortune to yourself, yea, you will lose your body and life in the undertaking; for I tell you that the spirits permit no jesting at their expense. For they are the Princes of the World. It is true that they can help you to riches, honour and glory, but you must know how to deal with them.

I, Fauste, tell you, if you do not procure for yourself in this world riches, honour, glory and voluptuousness, you have nothing to hope from the next. For all is over when we die.

I have therefore bequeathed to you, my reader, such *arcana* in this little book as will ensure that neither riches nor whatever gives you pleasure will be lacking to you, if you understand it and know how to handle it. Fare you well.<sup>1</sup>

Were it not for the withering scepticism induced by the perpetual false ascriptions of magical rituals, which is not lightly overcome, one would be inclined to believe that this preamble was written by the real Faust, the historical sorcerer and vagabond, who from all accounts was a pretty hardened specimen. There is also a real resemblance between the writer of the above address and the hero

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, pp. 1117f.

of the Faustbook of 1587, who rejected God in favour of the Princes of the World, that is to say the spirits of hell. The passage seems to be drawing too on his alarming experiences of deadly physical danger from the fiends whenever he tried to disobey, to repent or to recant. On the other hand at no time during his life would the Spies Faust have been able to lay the flattering unction to his soul that 'all is over when we die'; his ceaseless preoccupation with hell and its torments, his anguish when his own fate came close, precluded that sorry consolation. Nevertheless, the tone of the hardened and desperate sinner has been caught. Yet, though the real Faust may have been the author, this handbook is not, any more than the other rituals called after him, a genuine product of a Faustian school of magic deriving from the Faustbooks. The denial of the next world, the absence of the name of Mephistopheles from the spirits conjured in the text, the silence on the subject of the pact show its independence of the legend, although not necessarily of the real magician about whom the legends arose. Yet the independence is not complete. The Wittenberg compilation gives a set of spells to summon legions of horsemen and infantry when required; and Faust conjured up such an army in order to defeat the knight who was attempting armed reprisals against him for the trick with the stag's horns. There are also two brief descriptions of the kinds of manifestations to expect when invoking evil spirits which are strongly reminiscent of the one in the first Faustbook:

Be steadfast and see to it that you do not waver, otherwise you will be lost; for you will think that heaven and earth are collapsing in ruins, for fire, thunder and lightning will be heard and seen. . . .

And before you have even finished speaking these words, the devil with all his retinue will come forth on all sides, and let many things be seen, and try to frighten and terrify you by all manner of means; but you must not allow yourself to be deterred whatever happens; but stand firm and fear not, otherwise you will be lost; but fear not, he cannot hurt you.<sup>1</sup>

It is certainly disappointing that the Wittenberg *Höllenzwang*, which disseminates some of the aura of the legend here and in the preamble, should have ignored Mephistopheles in the conjurations, summoning instead by invocations said to be in the Hebrew and

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, pp. III9, II22.

the Chaldean tongues PLUTO, BALUZARATZ, AHIRIKASCH, KAPULIPH, ALMISCHAK and ARATRON. This latter is called the Prince of the Air and his name is to be found among the seven Olympic angels in two little handbooks of white magic called *Theosophia Pneumatica* and *Arbatel*.

Far from being white, this dull-looking text-book with its unintelligible spells and its queer-sounding fiends is a Satanic production, since it advocates allegiance to the devil rather than to God. It has nothing else in common with the lurid ceremonies of the Black Mass as described by sensational writers; but it is documentary evidence that at least one diabolic work existed amongst the many pious, orthodox and utilitarian rituals of the Faustian school.

Germany therefore contributed to ceremonial magic first and foremost the practical advice given by 'Agrippa' as to the best way to force the spirits to sign 'Solomon's' *Liber Spirituum*. 'Faust' clarified and amplified these instructions in *Magia*. Germany also, again in the person of 'Faust', taught the invaluable process for renouncing pacts with the devil, and produced in addition the most learned and exhaustive magical treatise of the age. If France dramatized and sensationalized ceremonial magic, Germany expounded it and also debased it by a display of grosser materialism, greater hypocrisy and self-deception, a more barbarous savagery towards the evil spirits and a more revolting sanctimoniousness than are to be found elsewhere. Canting, ranting and whining by turns, and always after big money, such specimens as the *Christopheles-Prayer*, the so-called *Key to the Black Raven* and the prayers and invocations in *Sea-Spirit*, in *Passau* and in *Prague* are the least attractive of those rituals of magic which have found their way into print.

The folk-lore, sporadically present in *Magia*, exemplifies the centrifugal force exercised by magical compendiums on related or unrelated mythological elements, sucked backwards as it were into the vortex from which they had originally emerged; and the confessions of the seven Electors witness not only to their planetary origin and therefore to their great antiquity, but also show (if rather feebly) the generative power latent in ritual. This same creative impulse is more strongly evident in the spectacular description of the monsters and marvels in *Sea-Spirit*, a theatrical

piece of writing whose aim rises above mere utilitarianism to attempt an aesthetic effect.

Refreshing as such far too infrequent moments are in the dreary sameness of ritual routine, they alone could never compensate for the boredom which must be undergone in studying the handbooks. But the specifically Faustian manuals have a real extrinsic interest, because they throw some light on the relation existing here between ritual and legend. It was the widespread fame of the hero of the Faustbooks which was responsible for the attempt so painstakingly made in *Magia* to force current notions about the German magician into a ritual framework which had not been designed for that purpose. Here therefore legend acted upon ritual and modified it, although only superficially. Faust, speaking throughout in the first person, described the invocation of Mephistophiel, acknowledged the pact with him, and brought him to the fore again and again throughout the course of the treatise. Wagner too came in for an honourable mention. Nevertheless the text thus reconditioned resisted radical transformation. Aziel lorded it over Mephistophiel who failed to usurp his sovereign power; worse still, the careful build-up of Faust's familiar spirit by the author of *Magia* proved to be unavailing. His name was kept, his character and invocations for him were given in the two little Vatican handbooks which cut snippets from the great classic; his name and character were still in evidence in the *Black Raven*; but he had lost his status as Faust's familiar; the pact was now said to have been with Aziel, and Mephisto was not even honoured with an invocation. His legendary part was referred to in the introduction to *Sea-Spirit*; but he did not figure in the body of the rite. As far as the other manuals go, he is conspicuous only by his absence. Nor is there a single one among those I have seen or heard of in which he is the chief or the first spirit invoked. Aziel plays the leading part in four of them; Lucifer in two; Pluto in one; Ariel in one; Seloth in one; Astaroth, Berith and Beelzebub in one; Mephisto in none. He was not therefore assimilated by ritual.

Faust himself failed to impress his personality on the writers who used his name. They trod the well-worn ceremonial path without much regard for the magician who was supposed to be guiding their footsteps. His name was certainly in great demand;

but the preambles, sometimes (but not invariably) written by 'Faust' in the first person, show a strange indifference to his legendary character and well-known exploits. The *Black Raven*, it is true, added an item to the story of the conjuring-scene; and, by reconditioning an almost forgotten anecdote, made Faustian dramatic history. This at least seems to have been the chronological order of events; for if the author had been borrowing from the stage-versions or the puppet-plays, it would be almost inconceivable that Mephisto should have been entirely omitted from the proceedings. Moreover, the puppet-play writers seem to have known the rituals; one of them may have borrowed the curious invocation: 'Limkischée, limkischée, O Pluto!' from *Wittenberg*.<sup>1</sup> Whoever was first in the field, it can at least be said that, in the trial by speed, the Faustbooks, the rituals and popular literature exercised a reciprocal influence. The author of *Sea-Spirit* for his part thought it necessary in 1692 to refresh the memory of his clients about the facts of Faust's life, and went astray about some of them himself; and it was really only *Wittenberg* who attempted to recreate the personality of the legendary magician in the address to the Magi. But, by allowing Faust to deny the existence of a life beyond and ignoring the pact in consequence, he gave proof of the optimism inherent in ritual magic and of indifference to the tragic legend of a doomed and desperate soul.

For this of course is the crux of the whole matter, the water-shed as it were between Faustian legend and ritual. They derive from two diametrically opposite conceptions of magic; and to judge by the fifteen ceremonial texts I have been able to examine, the rituals belong to a much older stratum. The Faust legend arose at a time when, after many ages of prepotency, the magus of antiquity—a Zoroaster, a Hermes Trismegistus, a Solomon, an Apollonius of Tyana—having suffered a tragic downfall in the person of Simon Magus, had degenerated and deteriorated into a mere sorcerer; and this decadent descendant of the magi of old was not only wicked but pitifully powerless, accomplishing nothing by himself, forced to rely on diabolic aid, and paying for that assistance with his soul. This was the sombre, lurid and pessimistic view of magic in the sixteenth century, on which Marlowe set the indelible seal of his tragic genius. Any rituals composed

<sup>1</sup> This occurs however in a spurious version by Engel.

under the shadow of that conception would have represented the magician as the doomed servant of Satan, implementing fearful rites, whose logical culmination would have been the Black Mass with its blasphemies, obscenity and worse. Although *Wittenberg's* preamble is Satanic, it nevertheless, like all the other rituals, is exactly what it purports to be, a *Höllenzwang*, a harrowing of hell, a constraint upon the fiends, and nothing more sinister than that; it even has a blasting rod to enforce the constraint.

Although other traces of what one might call a sixteenth-century Faustian state of mind about magic (as something dangerous and wicked) are occasionally to be met with in those texts which betray the emotion of fear, such passages have been superimposed on rites originally conceived in a much serener spirit and are confined to the preambles and occasional notes. In the body of most of the manuals the 'Faust' conducting the rites does so with a good conscience and is an extremely pious soul. This is in marked contrast to the religious situation of the hero of the Faustbooks who renounced his Maker when he signed the pact with Mephisto and thereafter trod the fearful path to perdition, well aware that he was doing so. This was the emotional background, the tragic religious assumption of the legend.

The *Höllenzwänge* belong religiously speaking to a much earlier age: to the world of the Akkadian-Chaldean inscriptions and of the Graeco-Egyptian papyri, animated by the belief that the gods could and would support the magician in his dealings with the demons if properly invoked; and that by the use of certain mysterious and ineffable names as well as other spells, they could be forced to do so even against their will. From the earliest times this extraordinary power was recognized as prone to abuse in the hands of 'black' magicians, but the Art itself was not only respectable, it was a high and holy one. Christianity altered all that, anathematizing magic, painting all magicians jet-black and monopolizing miracles. And yet this tremendous spiritual force which changed the face of European civilization never penetrated deeply enough into magical rituals to shake their profound optimism, their conviction of being in the right, and on the right side of the religious fence, their certainty of success in the operations described, their assurance that no bodily or spiritual harm would result from the process. Such is the strength of tradition

embedded in rituals. Christianity turned the myth of the magus upside down and altered its whole complexion; she was powerless to effect the same radical change in texts industriously Christianized on the surface and Faustianized during the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The gentry who reconditioned the texts in order to make capital out of Faust's name and yet wished to avoid spreading alarm and despondency about the ultimate fate of exorcists were presented with a very pretty problem when it came to the question of the pact and of eternal damnation. Eight of the fifteen manuals under consideration balked the issue. Of the seven which faced it, six were reassuring and the seventh non-committal. This was *Sea-Spirit*, which acknowledged Faust's pact with Mephisto in the introduction, and then let the whole matter drop. *Magia* gave both the ritual process and the text of a unilateral pact, which did not and could not figure in the Faust legend, but was impregnated with notions of the supreme power of Solomon, and entered German ceremonial magic through the good offices of Pseudo-Agrippa. This was followed by careful instructions for the making of a bilateral pact in a manner not absolutely binding, and supplemented by a process which would effectively break the agreement. The *Black Raven*, in this respect more regardful of the legendary tradition, invented a very plausible reason to account for Faust's pact, together with excellent practical advice as to how such a disaster could and should be avoided. The text of a unilateral agreement with Lucifer and the appropriate rite were further calculated to increase the *morale* of the exorcist. Both *Prague* and *Passau*, whilst earnestly warning against pacts, insisted that they were unnecessary, and that the evil spirits could be brought to heel without them. An otherwise negligible little manual threw doubt on the fact that Faust had ever made one. Otherwise it was passed over in silence.

The notion of a bilateral pact with the soul of the magician at stake bulked relatively large in the Faustian magical literature (I believe) because of its presence in the Faustbooks. Here therefore the legend made a definite impression on the rites. But it came up against the rock-like faith in the power of magic to which ceremonial literature as a whole bears perpetual witness. Practical magic is of necessity optimistic; and the traditional texts,

Faustianized and purveyed with whatever base motives and with whatever intent to deceive, still bore the imprint of their origin upon them: absolute belief in the power of certain ceremonies, formulae and names. The notions about magic on the other hand which had found expression in the Faust legend were terribly gloomy and tragic; and the pact was a dreadful instrument of direful doom. The Faustian rituals either ignored it, or denied it, or explained it away; or, as a last resort, showed how it could be circumvented. Their message was to the effect that the pact can be avoided and yet its fruits enjoyed; and that even if made, it can be renounced and broken by the grace of God. Thus spake a voice in no uncertain tone in *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*; and thus Lessing intended to speak, and Goethe actually did speak in their Faustian dramas. This was hailed in that age of enlightenment as a sign of very great spiritual progress. But the rituals had been beforehand on the subject of the extreme improbability of eternal damnation as a punishment for practising magic. They had stuck to the tradition of their craft and maintained that view undeterred by the grim and ghastly story of what had happened to the very magician whose name they borrowed to increase the furtive sales of their preposterous rites and ceremonies. It was easier for Lessing and Goethe who did not believe in magic. The ritualists did; but they clung to tradition and perhaps (who knows?) they may have been instrumental, however slightly, in making the wheel of magic come full circle again. One hardly likes to suggest this in view of the spiritual indignation and withering intellectual contempt experienced as one ploughs one's weary way through the greedy, the blasphemous, the double-crossing farrago of nonsense displayed in the texts. And yet the compilers, in their own language (a sadly illiterate one), and in their own way (which was highly indecorous), and in the very teeth of a tyrannical legendary tradition to the contrary, were the forerunners to a quite remarkable extent of the complete transformation of the Faust legend which Lessing initiated and Goethe undertook.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FAUSTIAN ADEPTS

#### (a) *Harrowing Hell*

Although the Faustian rituals bear stubborn witness to the wishful thinking of ceremonial magic, they create no very high expectations of the adepts whom they would attract. A dazzling peer of France, a wonderful Italian artist-craftsman, an incomparable adventurer, such were the outstanding persons drawn to the school of Solomon in the fifteenth, sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; whereas a muddle-headed artisan and a fanatical assassin were said to have patronized the art of 'Honorius' in the nineteenth. The motives and characters of amateurs like Gilles de Rais, Benvenuto Cellini and Giacomo Casanova, if not crystal-clear, are at least well-defined enough to admit of speculations; but we are almost completely in the dark about professionals such as Prelati and the Nigromant of Norcia, and not assured beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jean Verger had recourse to magic. Meanwhile the study of the texts has been gradually generating a Platonic idea of a 'black' magician. This phantom or eidolon differs fundamentally from the authors or compilers of the manuals. These, although uttering grave warnings, were intrepid arm-chair magicians, full of heartening counsel and encouraging advice. But an impression of hysteria mounting in their disciples becomes ever stronger as one reads on, especially when perusing some prayers in the minor Faustian rituals. We have seen panic gaining on the Nigromant of Norcia in the Coliseum; and how could it not do so, considering that the exorcist on this and all other occasions, alone or with even more panic-stricken assistants, had to keep all the rules of a fearfully complicated and dangerous game? One foot on the seal of the spirit, protective pentacles on brow and on breast; brandishing the conjuring-book in one hand, a sword, a blasting rod or a torch in the other; exhausted by vigils, fastings and prayers; unnerved by the midnight hour, by the lonely and probably sinister spot chosen for the operation; addled by all the ritual observances past, present and to come; fearful of omitting

or adding one word to the mysterious incantations in his text; poised on a tight-rope between heaven and hell; forces imperfectly understood all around him, and ignoble desires in his heart; truly if he is a sorry spectacle, he is also a pitiable one, the victim of the most extraordinary obsession which has ever disordered and deluded the mind of man.

This as I have said is the Platonic phantom evoked by the texts. It seems to correspond loosely with the state of mind undergone by the Nigromant of Norcia; and one would postulate something similar being experienced at every full-dress performance. But no student of human nature would expect such performances to be frequent, for they are far too arduous to be undertaken by the smaller fry of which Waite has given such a very pejorative picture, the seedy and needy professional:

We may picture him in the traditional state of the sorcerer—poor, proscribed, envious, ambitious, and having no capacity for legitimate enterprises. Unable to earn money, he hankers after hidden treasures, and haunts those spots up and down the country-side which are reputed to conceal them. . . . He does not long hesitate when he learns that the Grimoires of Black Magic are full of darksome rites and fell, mysterious words which compel or expel the guardians.<sup>1</sup>

This far from flattering portrait may serve to prepare one's mind for the sort of person to be met with in judicial and other accounts of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Germany; young men generally, convicted of having entered into a league with the devil, or of having used 'Faust's' *Harrowing of Hell* in order to raise buried treasure. For this was the only purpose to which such rituals were ever put. Certainly those who copied them out and purveyed them could truthfully declare that there was money in them; and the libraries and monasteries fortunate enough to possess any of the various Faustian *Harrowings of Hell* might well guard them carefully in special chests locked and chained to the wall. For whichever way you looked at it, either the treasure they could lead you to and help you to raise, or the price they could command made them tempting in the extreme.

Ever since the first Faustbook had vouched for the existence of the hero's magical works, legends had been rife about their

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. pp. 114f.

probable whereabouts and their miraculous powers. There was an ever-increasing demand for them, and a corresponding subterranean supply. Perhaps even before the end of the sixteenth century, and certainly early in the seventeenth, scribes of the spiritual underworld set to work on the original and too learned text. They either made excerpts from it, or boiled it down, or livened it up; or, if they happened to possess some other manual of magic, they put Faust's name to the title-page, adding perhaps some details for the sake of plausibility, and then started looking round for a gull. As late as 1791 a copy of a Faustian *Harrowing of Hell* could still fetch about £25 of our current money from inveterate believers, although the more wary sometimes got one for half that price. And by then scepticism was spoiling the market. It was a different matter in 1660, when a clerk in Hildesheim would have been enriched for life by the money a 'generous stranger' paid him for making a copy of one of these books. Unluckily the authorities, those anonymous pests, got wind of the transaction, clapped the scribe into gaol and instituted proceedings against him, on the grounds that he was trafficking with the devil, whom they genuinely believed the 'generous stranger' to have been, and all the more readily because he had disappeared. Let reason ask why the devil should pay good money down for a Black Book of any sort or description; reason will ask in vain. To the outraged 'authorities' the assumption was logic itself. The wretched clerk was now in a pretty pickle. Only by swearing the most terrible oaths of his innocence of any commerce with the evil one, and by producing witnesses of unimpeachable integrity to vouch for his honesty, did he manage to escape questioning by torture, which would almost certainly have resulted in a confession of guilt and death by burning. As it was he obtained his liberty in the end, but the money seems to have been confiscated.<sup>1</sup> No wonder that such priceless but dangerous secrets were generally purveyed *sub rosa* in an extremely furtive manner. Still the game was worth the candle to the middlemen of magic. But what about the purchasers? Who and what were the protagonists in the ritual dramas which bore the name of Faust?

During the life-time of this famous sorcerer, Luther himself was called in to deal with the case of a young Wittenberg student

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, p. 19.

called Valerius Glöckner who, though not under the auspices of Faust, had sold his soul, or so he believed, to the devil for money. According to his own story, he had been approached by the latter when in dire poverty, and had struck the infamous bargain with him which had actually put him in funds, whose origin had somehow been discovered. This looks very much like a case of another mysterious and generous stranger, who was up to no good. The Reformer first worked on the conscience of the young criminal with severe harangues. He then knelt down with him in church, laid his hands upon him, prayed fervently and made the youth speak a remorseful confession after him. The story ends there, so that evidently the student was saved or cured, and perhaps once more the stranger had vanished.

On December 11, 1596, fifty years after Luther's death, the Senate of Tübingen University examined a student called Leipziger on his supposed pact with the devil. The young man confessed (it seems not under torture) to a committee of theologians that he had been in commerce with the devil; adding piteously that it was his first offence, and that his debts had driven him to it. He owed more than two hundred florins; and the cutler in particular was dunning him mercilessly for three and a half florins. He owned that he had so far received no money from the devil and explained that he had only intended to bind himself for two years. Should he have died within that period, he would have broken his contract and told Satan that he had another helper, Jesus Christ. It was decided to keep him in prison until Christmas Day and to order him to prepare himself for holy communion; also to confine him to his lodgings for six months except for attendance at Church and the University. It was a mild sentence, considering the heinous nature of Leipziger's crime. But on January 8, 1597, it was reported to the Senate that he had not kept within doors, but had been frequenting various inns and had stolen three silver forks and three silver goblets during these visits. It was then decided to institute criminal proceedings against him; but first to inform his father in Saxony, so that he could send a lawyer to represent his son. An incorrigible wastrel, who fell back upon petty larceny when the devil (whom he hoped to cheat) did not come up to scratch. Nothing very remarkable about him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Scheible, *Das Kloster*, III, p. 1065.

In 1708 a tradesman in Leipzig produced a curious little publication which bears all the marks of genuine naïveté and honesty. It is a diary of the events occurring between October 2 and December 21, 1707 in so far as they concerned his servant, John George E. whom I shall call John for short. This credulous and almost feeble-minded youth fell in one day with a miller's apprentice, who forced his acquaintance on John, stood him drinks, suggested a visit to a wine-cellar; and when the other demurred on account of his poverty, he suggested a remedy for that. For the modest sum of twenty-four shillings (a pretty stiff price for John), to be paid in instalments of six and eighteen, he offered to sell him information as to how to lay his hands on any amount of buried treasure at very little expense of time and trouble. John was given a fortnight in which to collect the first instalment, and then rogue and dupe met again at an agreed place. After handing over the six shillings, John received from the miller's apprentice a copper divining-rod to locate buried treasure and a long extract from 'Faust's' *Harrowing of Hell*, copied from a manuscript on the spot. The divining-rod was on loan only, and had to be returned as soon as it had fulfilled its function. This did not happen all at once; and further advice had to be sought from the miller's apprentice before John was satisfied that he had located riches in his master's cellar and was confident of the exact spot. The apprentice then disappeared from the story, having given vague directions as to how John was to get in touch with him in the New Year in order to hand over the outstanding eighteen shillings, due when the treasure-hunt was successfully over. Probably he was more than satisfied with the six shillings he had rooked from the wretched John and was off to find other and perhaps richer fools, or he may have played a hidden part in the subsequent proceedings.

For a brief period John lived in a fool's paradise, and dreamt of finding and raising treasures all over the town of Leipzig. But after some abortive attempts, he decided to concentrate his efforts at home. On Friday October 21, 1707, again on October 28, and finally on November 4, between eleven and twelve at night, the three successive conjurations and the appropriate ceremonies advocated by the *Harrowing of Hell* were duly undertaken in the cellar by this pitiable tyro in the Black Art. Each time, according

to his own story, a spirit appeared, and also a small silver coin on the first occasion; a larger and older one on the second; and finally a tantalizing glimpse of a crock of gold in the earth beneath his feet on the third, which was accompanied by alarming manifestations. This was the moment, the miller's apprentice had told him, to sign a contract with the spirit. The deed in black and red appeared by magic, also a black pen, and a drop of red fluid fell from the ceiling on to his hand. He dipped his pen into the liquid and began to write his name. But he had hardly traced the initial letter when he heard heavy steps approaching the cellar. Panic-stricken, he flung the pen away, extinguished the candles he had with him in a butt of water, destroyed the circle and rushed up the steps: only to find that it had been a delusion; there was not a soul in the vicinity. He never managed to get back to the cellar again. It had to be on a Friday night. Paralysing panic overcame him the week following those terrifying manifestations. The Friday after that, his master insisted on his attendance at a midnight service. And the third time he tried, he found a mason working in the cellar. This was the last straw. His mind, never of the strongest, now became so obviously unhinged, that he attracted the attention of his house-mates, who had indeed noticed his strange behaviour, appearance and conversation as early as November 4. But, tormented by dreams of legions of devils at night, he now began to rave and blaspheme in the day-time; his master and his father-confessor, highly alarmed, questioned him closely; and in the end the whole story, the squalid truth mixed with the mad delusions, came out:

Meanwhile his peace of mind had gone, perhaps for ever. His fear increased every moment; he gazed wildly around him with a fixed stare, all his limbs trembled, and the complete collapse of his reason was feared. . . . He had to be guarded night and day lest he should do himself an injury. His desire to visit the cellar was an obsession, so that he even tried to escape the hands of his guards by force. But the threat of the house of correction finally made him desist. He was urged every day to pray and sing, and these exercises had so good an effect, that he gradually recovered the use of his reason, and in a few days seemed to be completely restored. More or less comforted, he departed with his father on December 21.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, II, p. 120.

It would...be unsafe to affirm [says Waite very truly] that all persons making use of the ceremonies in the Rituals would fail to obtain results. Perhaps in the majority of cases most of such experiments... were attended with results of a kind. To enter the path of hallucination is likely to ensure hallucination... To this extent some of the processes are practical, and to this extent they are dangerous.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to hallucination 'Agrippa' actually recommended circumambulating the circle, until giddiness and finally ecstasy supervened, after which the spirits would not tarry long. But John would hardly need this possibly ironical advice, being clearly capable of self-delusion which brought him to the verge of madness. This was one of the results of harrowing hell; in the story I am about to relate, the experiment ended in death.

Deeply rooted as one's scepticism all too justifiably has become about any documents, however legal, on the subject of black magic, especially those issued during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I am nevertheless convinced by the *True Account of the Jena Tragedy of Christmas Eve*, published in 1716, that two dead bodies and a third on the point of death were discovered in a little hut in a vineyard on Christmas Day 1715 amidst all the paraphernalia of a conjuration-scene. The circumstantial evidence is so realistic, even including a diagram of the scene; the account is so sober; the admissions of the one remaining witness ring so true; the judicial procedure was so meticulous; the strict adherence to known facts so close; that, together with the absence of torture, they positively command belief. According to the interpretation of the materialists the party of three was overcome by the fumes from the charcoal or coal; but terrible weals were found on the body of one of them. Dead, dying, black and blue, it was thus that they were discovered by a confederate, who ran for help; and the story of how they came to be there in such circumstances was gradually unfolded in all its pitiful, sordid and ignoble details.

If only the peasant called Gessner had not suspected the presence of buried treasure in his vineyard; if only he had not blabbed about it to the tailor Heichler, deploring the fact that he had no copy of 'Faust's' *Harrowing of Hell* wherewith to raise

<sup>1</sup> Waite, *Book of Black Magic*, p. vii.

it; and if only Heichler, scenting a commission at least, had not singled out the Jena student Weber as a confidant, none of all this would have happened. But Heichler, obviously gifted with low cunning, had either heard rumours about Weber, or knew the conjuring fraternity. For he never broached the subject with Weber's room-mate, Reche, who seems to have been an honest and decent youth, and knew nothing about the matter until the tragedy had occurred. Whereas Weber was just the man Gessner was looking for; since he possessed a copy of the *Harrowing of Hell*, the *Clavicula Salomonis* (almost certainly the *Theosophia Pneumatica*), pentacles, seals and other less pleasing magical objects. Before he would consent to lend his aid, he had however to be satisfied that the treasure was really there; and Gessner managed to convince him. The peasant knew all the jargon; he had once possessed the *Theosophia Pneumatica* himself, and this was not the first time that he had taken part in conjurations. He told a highly-coloured story of the circumstances in which he had seen the treasure, and how he had even managed to abstract a coin or two in spite of the guardian spirit. These coins were produced; they were old, and had in all probability been found by Gessner in his vineyard, convincing him of a hidden hoard. For he certainly believed in that, and was on tenterhooks to lay his hands on it. Further details of spirits haunting the site, which Gessner stubbornly refused to indicate, dissolved Weber's last doubts and, by the time a second peasant called Zenner had contributed a mandrake capable of opening locks at a distance, the venture had been definitely decided upon. The mandrake, by the way, was the property of the husband of a certain Mrs N. N., who was apparently Zenner's mistress. Conversations, assignations and preparations now became the order of the day between the four men. Weber identified the spirit guarding the treasure as Nathael under the lordship of the sun-spirit Och. He said that he had gleaned this information from the *Harrowing of Hell*, and he may have done so. It is even more likely, however, that it came from the *Theosophia Pneumatica*, since that manual, based on *Arbatel*, uses the name Och for the sun-spirit, and none of the Faustian texts with which I am acquainted do so. The name Nathael is unfamiliar to me; but the spirit itself, since it hailed from the sun and was to procure a treasure, bears a strong family likeness to



Aciei; and if it were indeed he under another name, then one can well understand the disaster which attended the invocation.

In blissful ignorance of the nature of the spirit they were about to raise, the party continued their ceaseless discussions as to ways and means. Heichler, who had set the ball rolling, was at first very anxious to be present at the conjuration; but Weber, whilst willing to risk an even number of participants, pointed out that the rules prescribed an odd number, showing himself more scrupulous in this matter than the Nigromant of Norcia. As Heichler was overwhelmed with orders for Christmas, he gave in on that point, and the more readily because he was afraid of being seen by the neighbours. He tried, however, to keep some control over the proceedings, and an eye on the treasure, by suggesting that the ceremony should be performed in an empty room in his house. So eager was he to persuade the others to this course, that he offered to clear the room for the purpose, and even to heat it. Had they agreed, it seems likely enough that no tragedy would have occurred. Zenner and Weber were willing; but Gessner evidently mistrusted Heichler, and would not fall in with his scheme. He was to show himself indifferent enough to the rules of ritual procedure in other matters; but on this occasion he came out strongly in the part of a great stickler for the regulations. He may also have felt that the nearer to the treasure, the simpler the operation, thus showing his common-sense. This was not the reason he advanced, however. Perhaps with the possibility of some hoax or fraud on Heichler's part in mind, he maintained that the conjuration should take place in a remote and lonely spot, or at the very least in an empty house, otherwise the spirit would attempt to deceive the exorcist by taking on the outward shape of one of the inhabitants. No, Heichler's little hut in the vineyard, which had from the first been chosen as the appropriate place, was the only right and suitable one. But it would be a kindness of the owner, if he would lend them his little blast-furnace to keep out the bitter cold. Heichler refused to do that, as it would be difficult to transport, and he might be seen doing it and attract undesirable attention. He promised, however, to bring out some coals, and also to slip round during the evening to see that everything was in order and to lend the conjuring party his watch. This final visit was not paid; probably Heichler's nerve deserted him. All this pre-

paratory organization and much more of a similar kind was further complicated by interminable discussions about 'lucky pennies' (supposed to multiply themselves after having suitable ceremonies performed over them). Should they or should they not attempt to obtain these as well as the treasure by bringing ordinary pennies to the forthcoming *séance* and getting the spirit to transform them into lucky ones? It was finally agreed that there could be no harm in trying; and this involved endless to-ing and fro-ing in order to procure exactly the right number of coins for each person, and little bags to hold them of exactly the right price, and of the right material. In the end Heichler had to make these himself, and give them to his wife, who then sold them to the exorcists for the ritual sum; and, need it be said, he made an extra one for himself?

Meanwhile Mrs N. N. had been let into the secret, but very sensibly refused to hear any details; she expressed a pious hope that it would turn out for the best, and advised them to wrap up warmly and to bind scarves round their heads in order to escape frost-bite. It will be noticed with dismay that the precious threesome with their aiders and abettors were thinking only of such material blessings as 'lucky pennies', fuel and warm clothes, and were totally neglecting the spiritual preparation, the prayers, the abstinence, the attendance at church so urgently prescribed by all the books. Weber, the most knowledgeable, did make some effort in this direction. He reminded his accomplices that conjuring spirits was a dangerous operation and demanded proper preparation; he even read them the rules, copied into his manuscript from 'Agrippa's' *Fourth Book*; but Gessner, that ignorant know-all, protested that this was quite unnecessary, that he had exorcized spirits before now without all that palaver; and it was finally decided to omit all the initial ceremonies, and to make the real experiment on Christmas Eve.

On December 24, 1715 therefore, Weber and Gessner set out from Jena at about four in the afternoon and called in at Ammerbach to fetch Hans Zenner. Gessner once more gave proof of his negligence by remarking of Weber's two magic books lying on Zenner's table that he had a very similar work at home, and regretted not having brought it with him; but that it did not matter much, as he knew the conjurations by heart. Zenner now began to quail at the thought of the lonely way before them and the desolate

position of the hut. He urged his companions to perform the ceremony in an empty house in Ammerbach, of which he was the caretaker; the owner (a widow banished from the country because she had committed adultery) having left it in his care. Unluckily he had lost the key; and the lower windows had no shutters, so that the proceedings might be overlooked. The proposal was therefore negatived, and they set out for the vineyard at nine in the evening. They carried lanterns to light them and magic seals provided by Weber on their persons to protect them from evil spirits. Entering the hut, they found the promised coals, and a tallow-candle lying on the table; but no Heichler to settle them in, and no watch. Weber wrote the name TETRAGRAMMATON in pencil on the outside of the door before they went in (off by heart says the account meticulously); and all three said the Lord's Prayer before sitting down. They then set fire to the coals which they put into a medium-sized flower-pot; but they were obliged to open the door almost at once on account of the fumes (the coal was probably charcoal). The fumes having dissipated, as they thought, and the atmosphere seeming perfectly fresh, they addressed themselves to the real business. Gessner drew the magic circle on the ceiling of the hut, and complete silence was maintained from then onwards by all as the book directed.

It was some time after ten when Gessner began the conjurations. He spoke the formula three times off by heart, with a pause of fifteen minutes between each recital in order to give the spirit time to manifest. Weber then read his version, which was almost identical with Gessner's, from his manuscript copy of 'Faust's' *Harrowing of Hell*. It contained the words TETRAGRAMMATON, ADONAI, AGLA, JEHOVAH, and other names of God; and was an invocation to OCH, the Prince of the Kingdom of the Sun, to send his servant NATHAEL to aid the exorcists in raising the buried treasure. Och, both in *Arbatel* and in *Theosophia Pneumatica*, is a good spirit; so that this inglorious experiment may have been 'white'. But black or white, it was to prove disastrous. Before Weber had completed the second reading of the formula, he felt his wits deserting him, everything went dark before his eyes, imperative sleep overtook him, so that he fell with his head on the table and lost consciousness; the last thing he noticed being Gessner and Zenner still sitting upright

at the table and apparently perfectly well. They were both dead by the next afternoon; when Heichler, suddenly overcome by panic during a sermon, rushed out to the hut (rather late in the day) to discover if all was well. A gruesome scene met his eyes. The two peasants dead as doornails, Zenner on the floor and Gessner sprawled over the table; while Weber, prone head downwards on a bench, was by the look of him at death's door. Heichler fled to Mrs N. N. who got into touch with Reche, Weber's fellow-lodger, and the two men repaired together to the hut. They found Weber nearly gone, unable to speak, but making strange, uncouth and terrifying noises. The other two were beyond human aid; 'Faust's' *Harrowing of Hell* was open on the table, a rosary lay there too, the famous pennies, still unchanged, and the protective seals which had failed to protect; the circle looked down from the ceiling, and TETRAGRAMMATON stared at them from the door. There was no hushing the matter up, and the authorities had to be called in. Weber was removed for medical treatment, and three watchmen were sent out to guard the corpses that night pending their removal and burial. What was the horror of all next morning to find one of these watchmen dead, and the other two nearly gone! Spirits surely must have been the cause. The two watchmen, when they recovered, were sure of it, and had hair-raising tales to tell of manifestations in the night. But the effect upon their imaginations of the tragedy of the night before must be taken into account. And again the ill-fated flower-pot filled with coals or charcoal figured in the tale. Once more, fumes were noticed at first, and seemed to subside after the room had been aired. Probably one need seek no further for the cause of the catastrophe; although the terrible weals and scratches found on Zenner's body were never explained. Nor the fact that his tongue was protruding from his mouth, and his neck and face covered with burnt powder-marks. Weber, overcome early in the proceedings, neither saw nor heard anything, until Reche and Heichler shook him back to his senses early the next afternoon. He also was marked all over his body, but these marks may have been due to frost-bite; and he was of course both physically and mentally shattered and shaken, as the medical report made clear. It ended with these words:

Since the incident, Weber has suffered all kinds of setbacks: disquiet, fear, pains in his back and stomach, aversion against food, vomiting,

etc., partly owing to chill, partly to lack of movement and spiritual unease. There is little remaining to do to heal his foot [which was frost-bitten] but otherwise the patient is in a very weak condition.<sup>1</sup>

During the judicial examination (again no torture was applied), Weber was discovered to possess quite a little store of magical objects and charms, most of them of a squalid nature, in addition to his manuscripts and pentacles. He obviously belonged to that band of students who in the sixteenth century and later were so often to be found attempting to beggar their neighbours one way or another and to lay their hands on buried treasure. Mrs N. N. and Heichler, both of whom denied everything, not to mention the departed Zenner and Gessner, were all of the same kidney: shady, grasping or disreputable. It is unlikely that all the experimenters with the *Harrowing of Hell* had quite such terrifying experiences as Weber and poor feeble-minded John; but it seems at least highly probable that it was a society of rogues and dupes who made use of 'Faust's' books of magic in Germany. A rigid ritualist would naturally protest that, with experiments undertaken so carelessly, so ignorantly, so wantonly and in such a very ignoble state of mind, nothing but evil could result. The very fact that two of the party spoke conjurations in that hut in the vineyard, when by all the rules one and one only should have uttered them, would have been sufficient to ensure a catastrophe.

For, remembering the language and style of the *Key of Solomon*, and harking back for a moment to the conjuration-scene in the Coliseum, one must in all fairness concede that there is a grand manner in ceremonial magic, and also acknowledge that the highest in the land have been known to practise it. A connexion between literature and life is discernible here: the effect of the former upon the latter. The Faustian texts were in themselves so abject, that one can hardly imagine any reputable magician making use of them. They automatically found their own level. For Faust's name on the title-page of a book of rituals is tantamount to a symbol of the decline of the Art. Degraded and debased, it had sunk to shabby little performances in dingy cellars or mean little huts. The fire which was lit by 'Solomon' to torture the devils' souls, and which was fed with sweet perfumes by

<sup>1</sup> Scheible, *Das Kloster*, v, p. 1050.

Cellini in order to constrain them to appear, was a mere means for keeping out the cold in that lean-to in a German vineyard. No wonder that it suffocated the exorcists, who had forgotten the traditions of its use, never thought of consecrating it and regarded it, as they did everything else in the proceedings, from a purely utilitarian point of view.

The incident is certainly a curious one and susceptible of occult interpretation. Those fearful weals, scratches and marks of burning on Zenner's body, which the medical faculty of Jena described minutely and which the dead man's wife swore that she had never seen, remain a stumbling-block to materialists. There is also the fact that both he and Gessner were discovered to have their trousers full of excrement, which reminds one of what happened to Gaddi in the Coliseum, and looks much more like the result of a sudden shock than a symptom of death by suffocation. Also Weber, who was the first to pass out under the influence of the fumes, was the only one of the three to escape with his life. Even discounting the stories told by the two surviving watchmen about the subsequent night, in which the ghost of a little boy of about seven or eight, after scratching at the door of the hut, opened it, glided about for some time, kept on blowing through the opening and finally banged the door; even discounting these and similar reports, it is odd that the dead watchman had been about out of doors as late as two in the morning in fairly good case, although very much frightened; and yet was dead, presumably from carbon monoxide poisoning when the day was breaking. Here, therefore, as is almost always the case with magic, there is no clear issue. The whole tragedy may have been due to natural means, or supernatural forces may have been at work.

(b) *Raising Cain*

The glimpses just given of genuine Faustian magic do not incline one to accept without scrutiny the statement made by Horst and reiterated by Scheible that Johann Georg Schröpfer (1730-74) made use of 'Faust's' *Black Raven* for his invocations. This once famous German necromancer was in a totally different class from the Glöckners, the Leipzigers, the Webers, the Heichlers and their ilk who were still functioning with Faustian *Harrowings of Hell* when Goethe was an old man. Schröpfer was so far from being

obscure and beggarly that Lévi for once does not seem to be overshooting the mark when he said that he lived 'in the midst of magical triumphs and the universal infatuation'.<sup>1</sup> His reputation as a magician even outshone Cagliostro's in his own day, but has not maintained itself at the same level; and indeed it is not easy to find reliable personal information on the subject of a man about whom such various and conflicting rumours (sardonically summarized by Waite) have been put into circulation:

Perhaps none of the affronts which have been offered it [Rosicrucianism] can have exceeded that of Johann Georg Schroepffer, who opened a café at Leipsic on October 29, 1768, and turned it into a Lodge of the Mysteries. Those which he communicated to his Initiates are, however, in that state of uncertainty which envelops so frequently the peculiar genius of HIGH GRADE MASONRY, apart from any conscious intention on its own part. It comes about in this manner, that we have a choice among the following alleged possibilities: (1) That Schroepffer was a member of the ROSICRUCIAN FRATERNITY prior to its reformation in 1777, the proposed inference being that—as he was himself an impostor—he was likely to have a hand in an association which, *ex hypothesi*, was incorporated by rogues for the better advancement of roguery; (2) That he was, or pretended to be, an Écossais Mason, and that he founded an Écossais Lodge at his café; (3) That he added thereto certain Rosicrucian DEGREES; (4) That the Lodge was simply a spurious Scots Lodge, into which he introduced magical and alchemical pursuits; (5) That it was Rosicrucianism purely and simply ... (6) That it was a particular transformation of ROSE-CROIX MASONRY in the interests of Magic and Alchemy, in which case the maker was either working the same scheme as F. J. W. Schroeder or the same personality has been presented under two names; (7) That Schroepffer was an *Illuminé* who practised Occult Illuminism under the guise of Masonry; (8) That he was a self-styled reformer of the Order of Freemasons generally; (9) That he was an emissary of the devil... In any case, Schroepffer's system had no claim on Rosicrucianism in any decent understanding of that term, and the designation has arisen almost certainly by an error of ignorance based on the alleged nature of the pursuits followed in his Lodge. These were evocations of the Dead, with which no branch of the Fraternity, genuine or otherwise, was ever concerned...<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> A. E. Waite, *The Secret Tradition of Freemasonry*, London, 1937, pp. 404f.

Schröpfer would therefore seem to have been first and foremost a necromancer; but his method, unlike that of Erichtho and the ritual texts of 'Faust' and others, did not involve the disturbance of a corpse. According to some sceptical and scoffing onlookers (who significantly enough did not publish their accounts until after his death), he made use of electrical contrivances, magic lanterns, dummy bullets and confederates to achieve his effects, and Schiller gave wide popularity to such notions in *Der Geisterseher*. He himself claimed to have power over the spirits, good, bad and indifferent, and declared that he always summoned the benevolent spirits first to assist him in his undertakings and protect him against the hostile ones, a time-honoured magical practice. He further claimed to be able to recognize the nature of the spirits by the noises preceding or accompanying their manifestation. He inaugurated the proceedings by a three-day prayerful fast, which his enemies stigmatized as 'religious humbug', but which was ritually speaking *de rigueur*. He took off his shoes before beginning his invocations and fell on his knees, commanding those present to do likewise; he would also lay two fingers on the Gospel of Matthew. For specifically necromantic operations, he made use of a room carpeted in black and with a black altar on which stood two candles and a skull or some similar object. He described a circle round the altar and impressed upon the onlookers that they must not step over it whatever might happen. He then began his invocations, burning magical incense the while. Suddenly the lights would go out of their own accord, and a violent noise shake the whole room. At this moment the spirit appeared hovering and swaying over the altar. Schröpfer's hostile critics maintained that this effect was produced by a magic lantern playing on the clouds of incense; and that on other occasions a confederate burst open the bolted door and appeared disguised as a ghost. The magician would then put all sorts of questions to the apparition, which it answered in a fierce and terrible voice. Another fearful din terminated the proceedings, during which the phantom vanished and the house was once more shaken to its foundations.

It would obviously be possible to manufacture these phenomena fraudulently, and it is probable that Schröpfer did so sometimes and perhaps even generally. Nevertheless he seems also to have possessed genuine psychic gifts which may have been in evidence



on one remarkable occasion, one of the most impressive in the annals of the Art. We owe what is tantamount to first-hand knowledge of it to Wraxall,<sup>1</sup> who got the whole story from one of those present, 'a man of sense, courage, and intelligence', but unfortunately anonymous.

Prince Charles of Saxony ('not only elegant in his person and manners; but, highly amiable and accomplished') had fallen foul of Schröpfer on account of some offensive remarks the latter had made about him. He therefore sent an officer of his household to mete out personal chastisement to the insolent magician. Whilst the punishment was in process, Schröpfer broke away, rushed into a corner, knelt down and began to invoke the aid of his spiritual allies. This alarmed the officer so much, that he beat a hasty retreat lest worse befall him. The affair made a good deal of noise, and Schröpfer found it convenient to leave Leipzig soon afterwards and to establish himself in Dresden under an assumed name as a colonel in the French army. The impersonation did not last long, his real identity was discovered, and his extraordinary feats of magic were soon the talk of the town. The elegant and accomplished Prince Charles could not resist the desire to witness them, and made public apologies and offers of amends to the man responsible for such marvels. The hatchet was buried, and such proofs were given of the magician's supernatural powers that Charles was in a perpetual state of admiration. One thing only was necessary to complete his happiness: to be present at a successful evocation of the dead. Schröpfer, whilst acknowledging that he was capable of performing this operation, was extremely reluctant to do so, maintaining that it was perilous to himself and 'attended with various circumstances of horror'. Wraxall attributed this to the magician's artfulness; but it may have been due either to the fear of detection or to genuine spiritual apprehension; for the evidence of the texts goes to show that experiments with the dead were regarded as more dangerous and direful than the evocation of spirits. The amiable Charles, however, far from being deterred by the possible peril to Schröpfer, would not take no for answer and finally won the day. Nothing now remained but to choose an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. throughout: N. W. Wraxall, *Memoirs of the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw and Vienna in the Years 1777, 1778 and 1779*, London, 1799, I, pp. 275-92, from which my account is taken.

appropriate ghost. After much deliberation the choice fell on Charles' late uncle, the Chevalier George of Saxony, a natural son of Augustus II of Poland. Not only had he recently died, a propitious circumstance for necromancy,<sup>1</sup> but he had bequeathed to his nephew the palace in Dresden in which he had expired and in which the invocation was to take place. Moreover, it was believed that he had concealed vast sums of money in the palace and that his ghost might be prevailed upon to indicate their whereabouts to his nephew. So that once again the lust for hidden treasure played a major part in a performance of ceremonial magic.

The coming operation had to be undertaken in secret, because the Elector of Saxony was a sworn enemy of magic; but there were many in the know, and not less than nineteen persons (all men) assembled in the palace on the night in question. Amongst them were 'many persons of the first rank and consideration' in Germany, several of them known to Wraxall personally as men 'of consideration, character, and respectability'. Nineteen witnesses constitute a very promising number; but they all seem to have acted and behaved as one man. The scene was laid in the great gallery of the palace; all the windows and doors were secured against intrusion and the company satisfied itself that there was no deception in that matter and that nothing short of violence could procure an entrance to the gallery, which was now hermetically sealed. Precautions of a sort were therefore taken, although the experiment was far from being 'controlled' in the modern sense; and twentieth-century readers will begin to smell a rat when they learn that Schröpfer proceeded to urge the assembly to fortify themselves with the punch he had brewed for the occasion on the grounds that the forthcoming ordeal would try them to the utmost. They nearly all thankfully obeyed; but there were one or two abstainers, amongst them Wraxall's informant:

'I am come here [he said] to be present at raising an apparition. Either I will see all or nothing. My resolution is taken, and no inducement can make me put any thing between my lips.'

Another equally canny disbeliever in Dutch courage went and placed himself beside the principal door in order to make sure that it should not be tampered with.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Erichtho, p. 27.

This does not appear to have discomposed Schröpfer who now withdrew to a corner of the gallery and knelt down. It was reported that his invocations were accompanied by many mysterious ceremonies, but no particulars were given of the ritual performed whilst summoning the good spirits to his aid. They tarried a very long time, as the texts would lead one to expect; and during that period the exorcist appeared to be labouring under great mental and physical stress, was covered with a violent sweat and appeared to be almost in convulsions. This is a phenomenon with which spiritualism has now made us familiar; Wraxall ironically likened Schröpfer to the Pythoness of antiquity; the witch-doctors of Africa and the shamans of Siberia experience similar states; and considering the violence of the efforts which ritual texts suppose, one can hardly wonder that the effect should be in proportion. At length a loud clatter was heard outside all the windows, followed by a noise as of wet fingers being drawn over the rims of glasses. This heralded the arrival of the protecting spirits, according to Schröpfer, and he seemed much encouraged by their presence, although they remained invisible. So did the wicked and malignant fiends, whose frightful yelling was heard shortly afterwards; they were absolutely indispensable to the completion of the operation, Schröpfer assured the company; and here again he was perfectly in line with the general tradition about necromancy.

That, however, would be unlikely to reassure the horror-stricken assembly who, individually if not yet collectively, were beginning to lose their nerve and were hardly fit to withstand the shock of what was to follow:

Schrepfer continuing his invocations, the door suddenly opened with violence, and something that resembled a black ball or globe, rolled into the room. It was invested with smoke or cloud, in the midst of which appeared to be a human face, like the countenance of the Chevalier de Saxe... From this form issued a loud and angry voice, which exclaimed in German... 'Charles, what wouldst thou with me? Why dost thou disturb me?'

An indescribable scene of panic now ensued, in which neither Wraxall's sober and resolute friend nor anyone else dared to approach or question the apparition, let alone investigate it.

Prince Charles was on his knees imploring God's mercy, and most of the others were piteously beseeching Schröpfer to dismiss the spirit he had raised. The latter was only too anxious to oblige them; but it proved almost beyond his powers; and incredible though it may sound, it was nearly an hour before his invocations had the desired effect. During all that time the petrified party were in the presence of that unnerving globular phantom with the human face, and not one of them could overcome the terror it inspired sufficiently to scrutinize or address it. At last it was gone, and they were just about to breathe freely when, horrible to relate, the door which had been closed behind it opened again and the same appalling apparition met their horrified eyes. They were now more dead than alive; and one imagines that Schröpfer must have been in like case; but he put forth his utmost exertions in exorcizing the spirit, and at last it vanished for good. Absolutely exhausted, the spectators dispersed as soon as they felt it safe to do so. Divided between fear of ridicule and horror of the memory of that night, all the witnesses were exceedingly reluctant to talk about it:

Their very friends dread and deprecate a renewal of the images then presented to those who were present; and a lady earnestly besought of me, not to press her husband on a subject, of which he could never think or converse without passing a sleepless night.

Wraxall came to the conclusion that only German credulity or superstition could account for the incident; for he was *a priori* convinced that Schröpfer had practised fraud, although unable to explain how it had been managed. And indeed the most striking feature of the case is the reappearance of the spectre which was not only totally unnecessary for purposes of conviction, but greatly added to the danger of discovery if trickery were involved. This also applies to the abnormal length of time of the first visitation. Taken together these two aspects of the situation would seem to suggest either that the ghost of the Chevalier de Saxe was out of hand, or else that the confederate was exceeding his instructions. In either case one does not envy the feelings of the unfortunate Schröpfer.

But magicians are by no means an enviable set of men, as witness their frequently lamentable endings. Gilles de Rais, who resorted

to magic, was put to death for his crimes; Kelley died untimely under mysterious and probably violent circumstances; John Dee declined into abject poverty and misery before his end; Guibourg was executed; Dr Lambe was stoned and beaten to death by an infuriated mob; Cagliostro expired in the dungeons of San Leo; Rasputin was murdered by his enemies. As for Schröpfer himself, he returned to Leipzig shortly after the palace miracle to avoid the consequences of the Elector's displeasure, and continued to practise magic and to initiate others. Then came the sudden and sobering end:

Three gentlemen...were promised by him an exhibition more wonderful than any at which they had yet assisted. For this purpose they attended him into the wood of Rosendaal, which is at a small distance outside the gates of Leipsic. It was in summer, before the sun rose, between three and four o'clock in the morning. When they came to a certain part of the grove, he desired them to stay a little, while he went on one side to make the requisite invocations. After waiting a few minutes, they heard the report of a pistol. Running to the spot, they found that he had shot himself, and was already without sense. He soon afterwards expired. All those who believe him to have had intercourse with evil spirits, affirm that he was tormented by them perpetually, which rendering his life miserable induced him to have recourse to a pistol.

Wraxall scoffed at this notion, but Lévi supported a similar one with his wonted vigour and eloquence:

Schroepffer, the famous illuminé of Leipsic, terrified all Germany with his evocations, and his audacity in magical experiments was so great that his reputation became an insupportable burden. He allowed himself to be carried away by the immense current of hallucinations which he had produced; the visions of the other world disgusted him with this, and he killed himself.<sup>1</sup>

Or again, shifting his ground:

Schroepffer acted in good faith...he believed in the reality of the spirits evoked by him, and he killed himself when he began to doubt it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, tr. Waite, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lévi, *History of Magic*, tr. Waite, p. 437.

Waite reports yet another point of view current about the suicide of the magician:

That on October 7, 1774, fearing the consequence of his impostures, he called his disciples together and told them that he was acquainted with the scandals which were being spread abroad concerning him, but that he had his answer. As a matter of fact, he gave it—after entertaining a considerable company at supper. That is to say, he invited them to take a walk in the suburbs of Leipsic on the following morning and there, retiring among the trees, put an end to his difficulties with a pistol.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the reasons behind Schröpfer's desperate act, it ought perhaps to be mentioned that according to yet another account he went aside to investigate a loud report proceeding from a clump of bushes and shot himself before his companions could rejoin him.

Wraxall's informant was chiefly interested in the physical appearance of the phantom Chevalier de Saxe and its dire effect upon the spectators. Like Cellini and others before him, he was disappointingly vague when describing the ritual which preceded the startling manifestation. Rather more light was thrown upon this subject by C. A. Crusius (1715-75), a professor of theology who produced a pamphlet about Schröpfer after the suicide had taken place. This pamphlet is extremely rare, and I have not been able to see it; but it is quoted at some length by Kiesewetter and includes certain details obtained from yet another witness of the Dresden palace miracle. According to Crusius' informant the trouncing of the magician was provoked, not because Schröpfer had been insolent to the amiable Prince Charles, but because of his steadfast refusal to summon up the spirit of the departed George. Otherwise the accounts of the seemingly supernatural incident tally very closely, although Crusius' friend was slightly more scarified than Wraxall's, and probably partook of the punch. He felt the whole palace shake to the noise of the ringing glass announcing the arrival of the guardian spirits and had the impression that all nature was in an uproar. He also contributed the spine-chilling detail that the apparition kept on gasping, moaning and rolling hither and thither during its sojourn in the gallery.

<sup>1</sup> Waite, *The Secret Tradition of Freemasonry*, p. 406.

What he told Crusius of the ceremony preceding the appearance of the ghost of George of Saxony is particularly interesting. He was struck by the long and moving prayer uttered at the beginning; he mentioned the frequent invocations to the Trinity and to Christ, and the petitions to God to favour the proceedings undertaken in His honour and to send His guardian angels to protect the exorcist. This certainly has a decidedly Faustian sound. Moreover, Schröpfer held a crucifix aloft when the evil spirits were heard, commanding and forcing them to kneel down before it. Even so was Aciel subdued in *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis*, and Aziel in the *Black Raven*. It is therefore possible that Schröpfer knew these manuals, the first of which contained a process in necromancy, bristling with prayers, but also absolutely dependent on a circle, of which no mention was made by either of the eye-witnesses to the ceremony. Further than this it is impossible to go; and it remains difficult to believe that a magician of Schröpfer's calibre should ever have put his faith in the *Black Raven* to the extent of seriously annotating and adding to that text, although he may have done so with intent to deceive rich dupes. Whatever the rights or the wrongs of the case, and whether the notes were forged or not, Schröpfer's name has become associated through their means with the Faustian school of magic, with which other equally tenuous links seem to unite him. There is therefore a faint and possibly spurious connexion between that fearful scene enacted among the aristocracy in the Dresden palace and the fatality in the hut in the vineyard precipitated by the *Harrowing of Hell*.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ART IN ENGLAND

#### (a) Scot

It is rather ironical that the only readily accessible collection of English ritual processes should be enshrined in the pages of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584, augmented by others in the third edition, 1665. Scot published them in order to mock at them, or as we should say to-day to debunk them; and almost certainly by so doing added greatly to their influence on literature if not upon life. For his satirical and censorious comments and marginal notes were powerless to deglamorize proceedings which have a certain charm even to-day, and which in his own times were fraught with fascination. They emanated, according to Scot, for the most part from a certain T. R. and John Cokars. The former in addition had evidently translated Wierus' *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* into English and had then written it all out:

In fair letters of red and black upon parchment...made by him Anno 1570. To the maintenance of his living, the edifying of the poor, and the Glory of God's holy name: as he himself saith.<sup>1</sup>

In this labour of love, T. R. had however been unable to include the seals of the spirits, because Wierus had not given them; therefore, though T. R. may have profited financially by his transcription, the poor will have remained *in statu quo* and God's holy names, rather mangled in T. R.'s version of Wierus' invocation, were used for the customary inglorious purpose:

*Oh great and eternal vertue of the highest, which through disposition, these being called to judgement, WACHOON, STUMULAMATON, ESPHARES, TETRAGRAMMATON, OLIO RAM, CRYON, ESYTION, EXISTION, ERIONA, ONELA, BRASIM, NOYM, MESSIAS, SOTER, EMANUEL, SABBOTH, ADONAY, I worship thee, I invoke thee, I implore thee with all the strength of my mind, that by thee, my present*

<sup>1</sup> R. Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, London, 1665, p. 238. I use the third edition throughout.



*Prayers, Consecrations, and Conjurations be hollowed (sic); and where-soever wicked Spirits are called in the virtue of thy names, they may come together from every coast, and diligently fulfil the will of me the Exorcist. Fiat, fiat, fiat, Amen.*<sup>1</sup>

Some beautifully executed tables of planetary hours and the like which follow this invocation are identical with plates to be found in a magical handbook called *Zoroaster's Telescope* and in 'Abano's' *Heptameron*. Later in the processes other finely-lettered figures of circles, seals, periapts, breast-plates and inscriptions are given, accompanied by lucid instructions. Ceremonial cleanliness is emphasized; fasting, prayers, psalms and the litany are also recommended; Latin formulae for the making of holy water with consecrated salt are included; and for one of the operations the necessity of having five bright swords to thrust into the five circles of the infernal Kings of the North (SITRAEL, PALANTHAN, THAMAAR, FALAUR and SITRAMI) is stressed. But any adept of the school of Solomon would harbour an uneasy feeling, on perusing this text, that English magicians, like English statesmen, must often have provoked disasters by being ill-prepared. The informal and happy-go-lucky nature of the preparations includes no daunting instructions about the forging of instruments, the tanning of skins or the mixing of inks; on the other hand neither is there any sinister talk of sacrificial victims or the letting of blood. The completest and most detailed set of rules for procedure is to be found in an operation entitled *An Experiment of Bealphares*; they are faintly reminiscent of those given in the *Lemegeton*; but sketchy and simple indeed by comparison with those in the *Key of Solomon*:

Therefore he that will do this work, shall abstain from lecherousness and drunkenness, and from false swearing, and do all the abstinence that he may do, and namely three days before he go to work, and in the third day when the night is come, and when the Starrs do shine, and the element fair and clear, he shall bath himself and his fellows (if he have any) all together in a quick well-spring. Then he must be cloathed in clean white cloathes, and he must have another privy place, and bear him ink and pen, wherewith he shall write this holy Name of God Almighty in his right hand +AGLA+ and in his left hand this name

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 239.

[magic symbols] and he must have a dry thong of a Lions or of a Harts skin, and make thereof a girdle, and write the holy names of God all about, and in the end + A & Ω + . And upon his brest he must have this present figure or mark written in Virgin Parchment, as it is here shewed [figure in margin]. And it must be sowed upon a piece of new linnen, and so made fast to thy brest. . . . You must have also a bright knife that was never occupied, and he must write on the one side of the blade of the knife + AGLA + and on the other side of the knives blade [magic symbols]. And with the same knife he must make a circle, as hereafter followeth: and which is called: *Solomons circle*.<sup>1</sup>

Though less attention is paid to the initial rites and preparations, the prayers and conjurations tend to be longer than those in the *Lemegeton*, whilst still falling short of the long-windedness of the *Clavicle* itself; and the rites in the first edition of the *Discouerie* (fully Christianized) differ sharply from 'Solomon's', partly because of the religious orientation, and also because they reveal two predominant Elizabethan characteristics: a fascinated pre-occupation with the macabre and the fantastic. These are reflected in the necromantic processes and the fairy folk which figure in T. R.'s rituals. Necromantic operations are by no means a stock feature of ceremonial magic in modern times, and are on the contrary relatively rare. The composite manuals eschew them for the most part, although not uniformly. 'Agrippa' mentioned a method for communicating with the dead; in a Latin handbook called *Veri Jesuitarum Libelli* there is a conjuration proper to raise a dead soul who had hidden treasure away in his life-time in order to force him to reveal it. Lévi described another necromantic process said by him to be in the *Grand Grimoire*; and though he may have been drawing on his vivid imagination, the Faustian treatise called *Magia* included a rite in which the spirit of a dead man was raised in order to obtain hidden treasure. On the whole, however, these execrable practices rarely got into print; and it illustrates both the boldness and scepticism of Scot that he published two of them in the *Discouerie*. They are variations of the same sinister performance. The first can be enacted over the body of a suicide or of a man hanged or gibbeted. In the latter case a solemn oath should be extracted from the condemned felon before his death,

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. pp. 251f.

that he will come at the call of the necromancer and serye him when he has quitted this life

*...and... I will give thee an alms-deed, and pray for thee N. to my Lord God, whereby thou mayest be restored to thy Salvation at the Resurrection day, to be received as one of the Elect of God, to the everlasting glory.*<sup>1</sup>

This is the bribe held out to the wretched ghost after death, coupled with fearful threats if he refuses to obey:

*Let the great curse of God, the anger of God, the shadow and darkness of death, and of eternal condemnation be upon thee Spirit N. for ever and ever; because thou hast denied thy faith, thy health, and salvation.*<sup>2</sup>

At the conclusion of this invocation, the spirit will appear in the crystal which the Master's fellow has in readiness, in the fair form of a child of twelve, and the stone will be found to be hot. Small wonder, considering the length and strength of the conjuration. This experiment combines necromancy with crystallomancy; for the operator desires visions in the crystal stone, although the grisly rite was chiefly undertaken in order to make the spirit procure the visible presence of the fairy Sibyllia, who is now summoned in her turn. The scene of this operation is far more pleasing; for it takes place in a fair parlour in which two circles of chalk must be drawn, one for her and one for the exorcist. No holy names must be inscribed in them and they must contain no holy objects. Although duly invoking this spirit by the martyrdom of Christ, the author also makes use of more fanciful constraints

*...by the dreadful day of doom... by all the characters that be in the Firmament, and by the King and Queen of Fairies, and their vertues, and by the faith and obedience that thou bearest unto them... by the blood that ran out of the side of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, and by the opening of Heaven, and by the renting of the Temple... and by the unspeakable Name of God TETRAGRAMMATON. I conjure thee O SIBYLLIA; O blessed and beautiful Virgin, by all the royall words aforesaid... to appear in that circle before me visibly, in the form and shape of a beautiful woman in a bright and white vesture, adorned and garnished most fair... For I will choose thee to be my blessed Virgin, and will have common copulation with thee.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 246.

This worthy end having been achieved, similar rites may be performed to induce the three Sisters of Fairies: Milia, Achilia and Sibylia to bring to the exorcist the ring of invisibility, by means of an invocation which cannot fail:

And if they came not at the first night, then do the same the second night, and so the third night, until they do come: for doubtless they will come, and lie thou in thy bed, in the same Parlor or Chamber; And lay thy right hand out of the bed, and look thou have a fair silken Kercher bound about thy head, and be not afraid, they will do thee no harm: For there will come before thee three fair women, and all in white cloathing, and one of them will put a Ring upon thy finger, wherewith you shalt go invisible. . . . When thou hast this Ring on thy finger, look in a Glass, and thou shalt not see thy self.<sup>1</sup>

'Solomon's' recipe for invisibility required a waxen image and the skin of a frog or a toad killed by the exorcist, also one of the hairs of the operator's head, suspension of the image from a vault in a cavern and periodic burial. The *Grimorium Verum* advocated the interment of seven black beans with the head of a dead man, to be buried face upwards and watered with brandy. The *Little Albert*, gloating over Gyges and his adultery, recommended a ring made of mercury and set with a stone found in a peewit's nest; or alternatively to plait a ring with the hair of a hyena and to place it for nine days in a peewit's nest. All these processes show close affiliations with folk-lore. The English version, opening most gruesomely beside the corpse of a malefactor, comes to a happy ending in fairyland.

The second necromantic operation communicated by Scot has no such alleviation in store for the exorcist. It goes into fearful detail about the last hours of the doomed man, during which the sorcerer binds himself to pray for the soul of the condemned criminal all the days of his life; and the latter engages to return from the other world and do all the necromancer's bidding on pain of everlasting damnation. This is a very dark rite. The urgency of the language, the relentless pressure brought to bear on the victim whose last hours are spent listening over and over again, twenty-four times at least, whilst the other reads the bond, repeating inexorably: 'Remember thine oath and promise', all

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 248.

contribute to produce a ghastly impression. And the interminable conjuration after death prolongs the agony, with its merciless and appalling threats in case of disobedience:

*...thou shalt not take any resting place in the sun nor in the moon nor in Saturn nor in Jupiter nor in Mars nor in Venus nor in Mercury, nor in any of the twelve signs, nor in the concavity of the Clouds, nor in any other privie place, to rest or stay in, but only with me N...all the days of my life...If thou be not obedient unto me, according to thine oath and promise, I N. do condemn the spirit of N. into the pit of hell for ever...into the place whereas there is no hope of remedy, but everlasting condemnation, and horror, and pain upon pain, daily, horribly, and lamentably the pains there to be augmented, so thick as the starrs in the Firmament, and as the gravel sand in the Sea...<sup>1</sup>*

Only in certain of the Greek love-charms is there anything in the printed annals of magic comparable to the violence offered here to a human spirit. The poor ghost now manifests as the exorcist dictates: as a white angel, a green angel, a black angel, a man, a woman, a boy, a virgin, a white greyhound or a devil with great horns, and must be banned into the crystal stone. The necromancer may then concentrate on his prime object: the wringing of information about buried treasure from the spirit he has raised. A less oppressive process also gives the method by which a spirit of an indeterminate character may be made to appear in a crystal in the fair form of a child of twelve for the same mercantile purpose.

For the crystal dominates T. R.'s rituals. The lofty and elaborate ceremony which invokes the five infernal Kings of the North (SITRAEL, PALANTHAN, THAMAAR, FALAUR, SITRAMI), who appear before the circle on horseback, has for its aim the enclosure in a crystal or a beryl-stone of a familiar spirit

*...learned and expert in all Arts and Sciences...that the said spirit may teach, shew and declare unto me, and to my friends, at all hours and minutes, both night and day, the truth of all things both bodily and ghostly, in this world, whatsoever I shall request or desire, declaring also unto me my very name.<sup>2</sup>*

Even in the rite of Bealphares ('the noblest carrier that ever did serve any man upon the earth') there is mention made of 'inclosing

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 250.

of the said Spirit', although he is not explicitly banned into a crystal, stone or mirror on his appearance, as are all the other spirits summoned with the exception of those in the *Pseudomonarchia* rite translated from Wierus. Bealphares is rather peremptorily addressed:

*Look ready thou be to appear unto me, and to give me good counsel, how to come by treasures hidden in the earth, or in the water, and how to come to dignity and knowledge of all things, that is to say, of the Magick Art, and of Grammar, Dialectike, Rhetorike, Arithmetick, Musick, Geometry, and of Astronomy, and in all other things my will quickly to be fulfilled; I charge upon pain of everlasting condemnation.*<sup>1</sup>

This is almost comprehensive enough to be called a pocket version of the boons declared to be in the gift of the demons of the *Lemegeton*, which T. R. had under his eyes, although (and who can blame him?) he made no use of the spirits' names. Except in the matter of necromancy, these rites are a good deal less oppressive than those of the school of 'Solomon' and far less tedious and tasteless than those of the Faustian brand. The spirits of whatever kind are never exposed to roasting, scourging or to being trampled underfoot; and Elizabethan English sorts better with magical operations than semi-illiterate German or seventeenth-century French. Nevertheless, the main pattern is unaltered and the same emotions are expressed: the love of money, the lust for knowledge and power, the ruthlessness in obtaining them (especially with the ghosts); the fear of the form in which the spirits may manifest; the deep dread of the peril to the exorcist manifest in such phrases as 'nor yet that thou shalt have any power of my body or soul, earthly or ghostly'; and 'without any sacrifice doing to him, and without forsaking thy God, that is, thy Maker'. For all that, the predominance of the crystal in these rites, the experiments in necromancy, the presence of the fairies, an indefinable something in the language, a freer play of fancy, names with some mystery surrounding them; all this gives to the rites in the first edition of the *Discoverie of Witchcraft* a character of their own; and we can well believe what Scot said of the magicians who employed them, that they went to work with a kind of majesty and with authority.

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 253.

(b) *Anti-Scot*

Being a sceptic, Scot was against them, calling them 'cozenors' for 'conjurers' in the margins; and one cannot help wondering if his ghost was disturbed in 1665 when an anonymous writer with views diametrically opposed to his own added a second book to the *Discourse of Devils and Spirits* at the end of the *Discouerie* and nine chapters at the beginning of the fifteenth book treating of conjurations. Yet it was poetic justice in the literal sense; for it looks very much as if the influence Scot had quite involuntarily exerted on the Elizabethan dramatists were now returning to confound him under the Jacobean. The following description of the clothes and the tools of magicians certainly reads like a prose reminiscence from Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens*:

Their garments they compose of White Linnen, black Cloth, black Cats-skins, Wolves, Bears, or Swines skins. The Linnen because of its abstracted Quality for Magick delights not to have any Utensils that are put to common Uses. The skins of the aforesaid Animals are by reason of the *Saturnine* and *Magical qualities* in the particles of these beasts: Their sowing-thread is of silk, Cats-guts, mans Nerves, Asses hairs, Thongs of skins from Men, Cats, Bats, Owls, Moles. . . Their Needles are made of Hedge-hog prickles, or bones of any of the above-said Animals; Their *Writing-pens* are of Owls or Ravens, their *Ink* of Mans blood: Their Oyntments Mans fat, Blood, Usnea, Hoggs-grease, Oyl of Whales. Their *Characters* are ancient *Hebrew* or *Samaritan*. Their *Speech* is *Hebrew* or *Latine*. Their *Paper* must be of the Membranes of Infants, which they call *Virgin-parchment*, or of the skins of Cats, or Kids. Besides, they compose their *Fires* of sweet Wood, Oyl or Rosin: And their *Candles* of the Fatt or Marrow of Men or Children. Their *Vessels* are *Earthen*, their *Candlesticks* with three feet, of dead mens bones: Their *Swords* are steel, without guards, the poynts being reversed.<sup>1</sup>

'Solomon's' preparatory rites underlie this passage, but they have suffered contamination from Scot's accounts of the practices attributed to witches, which he mocked at as fictitious, but which the present author, whom I shall call Anti-Scot, took for gospel truth. With such convictions, it is not to be wondered at that he saw a darksome beauty in the ritual processes derided by his

<sup>1</sup> *A Discourse . . . of Devils and Spirits*, printed at the end of the *Discouerie*, p. 72.

predecessor and improved upon them; for it seems fairly certain that the anonymous author of the second book of *A Discourse of Devils and Spirits* also composed the magical rites which were printed in the fifteenth book of the *Discouerie* immediately preceding Scot's. By doing this violence to the spirit of the text he was tampering with, he brought poetry back into ceremonial literature for the first time since the days of the Greek papyri.

The preliminary rites and ceremonies, not scanted as was the case with T. R., are nevertheless communicated without the excessive tediousness of 'Solomon', and seem like a more detailed and practical version of the parallel passages in the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*. Moreover, a decidedly eerie note is struck about the place of exorcism, which 'Solomon', although giving almost identical instructions, just fell short of achieving, although this may well be due to the difference between Mathers' language and that of Anti-Scot:

As for the places of Magical Circles, they are to be chosen melancholly, dolefull, dark and lonely; either in Woods or Deserts, or in a place where three wayes meet, or amongst ruines of Castles, Abbies, Monasteries, &c. or upon the Seashore when the Moon shines clear, or else in some large Parlour hung with black, and the floor covered with the same, with doors and windowes closely shut, and Waxen Candles lighted.<sup>1</sup>

In such surroundings a process in necromancy is described which reads like a scene from Elizabethan drama, enacted by a wizard and the corpse of some unhappy creature who has strangled himself and is supposed to be found hanging in a wood, a churchyard or a burial place. The magician, who has tracked him to his lair, stretches forth his consecrated hazel wand to the four corners of the earth and intones an incantation:

*By the mysteries of the deep, by the flames of BANAL, by the power of the East, and by the silence of the night, by the holy rites of HEGATE, I conjure and exorcize thee thou distressed Spirit, to present thyself here, and reveal unto me the cause of thy Calamity, why thou didst offer violence to thy own liege life, where thou art now in beeing, and where thou wilt hereafter be.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 217. Waite gave this process in full in *The Book of Black Magic* from a manuscript in the British Museum, believing it to be still unpublished.



During the second conjuration, the corpse is smitten nine times gently and then cut down, after which a third invocation must be uttered three times:

*I conjure thee thou spirit of N. that thou do immediately enter into thine antient body again, and answer to my demands, by the virtue of the holy resurrection, and by the posture of the body of the Saviour of the world, I charge thee, I conjure thee on pain of the torments and wandering of thrice seven years, which I by the power of sacred Magick rites, have power to inflict upon thee; by thy sighs and groans, I conjure thee to utter thy voice....*<sup>1</sup>

Then the corpse will begin to rise and at last stand upright before the necromancer, answering all the questions propounded in a faint and hollow voice. The first ones are about its own estate and what the magician can do to assist it; then comes a query about buried treasure; finally questions about the places where ghosts reside, how to communicate with them, and about the nature of astral and hellish spirits. When the necromancer is satisfied, he ought, out of commiseration and reverence for the dead, to use every possible means which may procure rest to the spirit. The burning of the body to ashes<sup>2</sup> or its partial destruction by quicklime is recommended for this purpose. Both this process, and a shorter one to raise the spirit of a man who has died a common death and whose body must be disinterred, are said to be extremely dangerous to magicians born:

...for fear of suddain death ensuing, which the Ghosts of men deceased, can easily effect upon those whose nativities lead them to Conjuratiō: And which suddain and violent death, the Stars do alwayes promise to such as they mark with the *Stigma* of Magicians.<sup>3</sup>

The eeriness of the foregoing spell with its mingling of compulsion and compassion ('*Rest, rest, perturbed Spirit!*') is in strong contrast with the ritual prescribed for obtaining the apparition and familiarity of the genius or good angel of the operator. If not quite at the height of similar processes aiming at the same objective to be found in the Greek papyri, it rises above the level of both 'Solomon' and 'Agrippa', although the latter especially diffuses an atmosphere of serenity and calm, as refreshing as it is rare in the

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Erichtho's promise to the ghost, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 218. Involuntarily one remembers Schröpfer.

literature of magic. There is more poetry and imagination, however, in the ritual prescribed by Anti-Scot, for which great gravity and sanctity are said to be essential, in order to persuade the good genius PHANAEL to appear in a triangular crystal stone. The initial preparations are simple and dignified, the place chosen is a small private closet, and the opening prayer has flashes of beauty:

*Thou that ridest upon the wings of the wind, and art mighty and potent in thy celestial and super-lunary motion, do thou descend and be present I pray thee . . . by the tears of Saints and Songs of Angels . . .*<sup>1</sup>

This prayer must be repeated fifteen times, first to the East and then thrice to all the four winds, after which

...the magician must arise from his knees, and sit before the Crystal bare-headed with the consecrated Bible in his hand, and the Waxen Candles newly lighted, waiting patiently and internally for the coming and appearance of the *Genius*.

Now about a quarter of an hour before the Spirit come. There will appear great variety of apparitions and sights within the glass; as first a beaten road or tract, and travelers, men and women marching silently along; next there will Rivers, Wells, Mountains and Seas appear: after that a Shepherd upon a pleasant hill feeding a goodly flock of Sheep, and the Sun shining brightly at his going down; and lastly, innumerable shews of Birds and Beasts, Monsters and strange appearances, noises, glances, and affrightments, which shews will at last vanish at the appearance of the *Genius*.

And then the *Genius* will present it self amidst the Crystal, in the very same apparel and similitude that the person himself is in, giving instructions unto the Exorcist how to lead his life and rectifie his doings.<sup>2</sup>

But that it lacks the sinister figure of Kelley in his black skull cap, one could almost imagine this description to be an extract from the *Spiritual Diary* of Dr Dee.

It is, however, not only one's own doings that need rectifying; and the spirits of the airy regions, summoned in another rite, are particularly recommended for their usefulness in battle:

'Twas through the assistance of these airy Spirits, that *Chanciancungi*, the *Tartarian* Emperour did give the *Chinois* such a desperate rout near the year 1646, for it is reported, that he had constantly in his presence

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

two Magicians, named *Ran* and *Sionam*, who perceived every motion of the *China's* Army, and had intelligence by these Spirits of the Emperours private Counsels and Consultations.<sup>1</sup>

Even more useful (at least to housewives) than these spiritual spies is the domestic spirit called *Luridan*:

LURIDAN...did for many years inhabit the Island of *Pomonía*, the largest of the *Orcades* in *Scotland*, supplying the place of Manservant and Maid-servant with wonderful diligence to these Families whom he did haunt, sweeping their rooms, and washing their dishes and making their fires before any were up in the morning. This LURIDAN affirmed, That he was the *genius Astral*, of that Island, that his place of residence in the dayes of *Solomon* and *David* was at *Jerusalem*; That then he was called by the *Jewes* BELELAH, and after that he remained Long in the Dominion of *Wales*, instructing their Bards in *Brittish* Poesy and Prophecies being called URTHIN, WADD, ELGIN: And now said he, I have removed hither, and alas my continuance is but short, for in 70 years I must resigne my place to BALKIN Lord of the *Northern* mountains.<sup>2</sup>

This passage is a pure piece of folk-lore, preceded by a reference to Robin Goodfellow, and very similar in language and tone to what Robert Burton had to say about such obliging creatures in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621-38), where he referred to Iceland and Mount Hecla as densely haunted by familiar and subterranean spirits. In the rite of *Luridan* given by Anti-Scot amongst his other conjurations we are told in the preamble:

His office (being called by Magicians) is to demolish strong holds of enemies...to extinguish fires...for his nature is to be at enmity with fire...he wageth continual wars with the fiery Spirits that inhabit the Mountain *Hecla* and *Iseland*...<sup>3</sup>

For this reason a drawing of a fiery mountain (given in the text) must be made outside the circle when summoning *Luridan*. This seems a clear case of legend insinuating itself into a ritual process; and it can be more generally stated that the philosophy, tradition, myths and legends of magic collected together in Book II of the *Discourse...of Devils and Spirits* were used as a basis for

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> *Discourse...of Devils and Spirits*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 224.

the rites which Anti-Scot added to the fifteenth book of the *Discouerie*. To give another instance, the author contended in his theoretical treatise that spirits speak a language of their own:

But when they appear in the outward Elements, they do many times express themselves in *Irish, Welch, Latine, or Russian*, which are the languages most affected by them to answer unto Conjurations, or Compacts. So that if any Magician, who is ignorant of these aforesaid Languages do at any time Raise or Exorcize such spirits, he must be mindful to confine them to his mother tongue; least their gibberish prove altogether unintelligible...<sup>1</sup>

In the rite, the pygmies who appear after the first invocation, and are asked for information about Luridan, make answer in 'ancient Irish': 'HAMAH NI TRULLOH BALKIN' ('he is Secretary or servant unto BALKIN'), and scurry off to fetch him, presenting him on their reappearance in the guise of a little dwarf with a crooked nose whom they place within the triangle outside the magic circle:

...then the Magician shall bind and tye him with the bond of obligation, and with his own blood, without any contract of conditions to be performed, that he will attend him constantly at his thrice repeating LURIDAN, LURIDAN, LURIDAN. And be ever ready to go whether he will, to the *Turks*, or to the uttermost parts of the Earth, which he can do in an hour, and destroy all their Magazines.

After the Magician hath so bound him, he shall receive from the Spirit a scrole...which is the Indenture to serve him for a year and a day...<sup>2</sup>

This forms a very pleasing contrast to the Karcist's pact with Lucifuge and to the Faustian contracts, whether unilateral or bilateral. The only point of similarity is the mention of blood; for though, owing to the ambiguity which haunts our personal pronouns, this might be Luridan's, considering that he is a spirit of the air, it seems more reasonable to assume that it must be the magician's. The latter's blood is certainly necessary to besprinkle the circle when calling up Balkin himself, 'a great Lord and very lofty', who will be preceded by a fearful elemental din and an innumerable company of dwarfs mounted on chameleons; he appears himself like the god Bacchus on a little goat and produces

<sup>1</sup> *Discourse... of Devils and Spirits*, p. 64.    <sup>2</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 226.

an unnerving fog that will even darken the moon, but happily will not last long. After answering numerous questions, Balkin will, at the magician's request, produce

... a little Spirit of a span long, like a little *Ethiop*, which the great King BALKIN will deliver unto the Exorcist to continue as a Familiar unto him as long as his life shall last. This familiar the possessor may name as it pleaseth him. The three last, who had this Spirit into possession, were three *Northern* Magicians, the first *Honduros* a *Norwegian*, who called it PHILENAR, and commanded it at his pleasure with a little Bell.

After him *Benno* his eldest Son enjoy'd the same under the same name.

And *Swarkzar* a *Polonian* Priest was the last who enjoy'd it under the Name of MUNCULA; all which names were imposed upon it, according to the pleasure of the Masters; and therefore the naming of this familiar is left to the discretion of the Exorcist.<sup>1</sup>

Anti-Scot fathers the rite of Balkin onto 'Vaganostus the Norwegian'; but does not mention 'Solomon' in introducing the rite of Paymon, Bathin and Barma, the first two of which are on the famous Index of the *Lemegeton*. Actually he was very suspicious of this list, as he confessed in the *Discourse... of Devils and Spirits*, 'because of the little coherence it hath with the former received Names of Devils'; and his brief account of Paymon and Bathin at the beginning of the ceremony is independent of 'Solomon's'. Nevertheless (as was the case with the Faustian *Sea-Spirit* to a far lesser extent) the spirits 'Solomon' had baptized knew an hour of glory in the following text, which induces one to echo Shakespeare's question: 'What's in a name?'

... the Magician that desireth to consult with either of these Spirits, must appoint a night in the waxing of the Moon, wherein the Planet *Mercury* reigns, at 11 a clock at night; not joyning to himself any companion, because this particular action will admit of none; and for the space of four dayes before the appointed night, he ought every morning to shave his beard, and shift himself with clean linnen, providing beforehand the two Seals of the Earth, drawn exactly upon parchment, having also his consecrated Girdle ready of a black Cats skin with the hair on, and these names written on the inner side of the Girdle: PA, PA + AIE, AAIE + ELIBZA + ELOHIM + SADAY + PAH ADONAY + tuo robore + Cinctus sum +.

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 228.

Upon his Shoes must be written TETRAGRAMMATON, with crosses round about, and his garment must be a Priestly Robe of black, with a Friars hood, and a Bible in his hand. When all these things are prepared, and the Exorcist hath lived chastly, and retired until the appointed time: Let him have ready a fair Parlour or Cellar, with every chink and window closed; then lighting seven Candles, and drawing a double Circle with his own blood, which he must have ready beforehand: let him divide the Circle into seven parts, and write these seven names at the seven divisions, setting at every name a Candle lighted in a brazen Candlestick in the space betwixt the Circles: The names are these, CADOS+ESCHERIE ΔANICK+SABRAC ∇SAGUN+ +ABA+ABALIDOTH Δ.

When the Candles are lighted, let the Magician being in the midst of the Circle, and supporting himself with two drawn swords, say with a low and submissive voice: *'I do by the vertue of these seven holy Names which are the Lamps of the living God, Consecrate unto my use this inclosed Circle, and exterminate out of it all evill Spirits, and their power; that beyond the limit of their circumference they enter not on pain of torments to be doubled, PAH, AGION, HELIOZ, HELIGAH, Amen.'*

When this Consecration is ended, Let him sprinkle the Circle with consecrated Water, and with a Chafing-dish of Charcole, perfume it with Frankincense and Cinamon, laying the Swords a cross the Circle, and standing over them; then whilst the fumigation burneth, let him begin to call these three Spirits in this following manner:

*I Conjure and Exorcize you the three Gentle and Noble Spirits of the power of the North, by the great and dreadful name of PEOLPHAN your King, and by the silence of the night, and by the holy rites of Magick, and by the number of the Infernal Legions, I adjure and invoke you; That without delay ye present your selves here before the Northern quarter of this Circle, all of you, or any of you, and answer my demands by the force of the words contained in this Book. This must be thrice repeated, and at the third repetition, the three Spirits will either all appear, or one by lot, if the other be already somewhere else employed; at their appearance they will send before them three fleet Hounds opening after a Hare, who will run round the Circle for the space of half a quarter of an hour; after that more hounds will come in, and after all, a little ugly AEthiop, who will take the Hare from their ravenous mouths, and together with the Hounds vanish; at last the Magician shall hear the winding of a Hunts-mans horn, and a Herald on Horseback shall come galloping with three Hunters behind him upon black Horses, who will compass the Circle seven times, and at the seventh time will make a stand at the Northern quarter, dismissing the Herald that came up before them,*

and turning their Horses towards the Magician, will stand all a brest before him, saying: GIL PZAGMA BURTHON MACHATAN DENNAH; to which the Magician must boldly answer; BERAL, BEROALD, COZATH, KERMIEL; *By the sacred rites of Magick ye are welcome ye three famous Hunters of the North, and my command is, that by the power of these Ceremonies ye be obedient and faithful unto my summons, unto which I conjure you by the holy Names of God, PAH, GIAN, SOTER, PAH, JEHOVAH, IMMANUEL, TETRAGRAMMATON, PAH, ADONAY, SABATAY, SERAPHIN; Binding and obliging you to answer plainly, faithfully and truly, by all these holy names and by the awful name of your mighty King PEOLPHON.*

Which when the Magician hath said, the middle Hunter named PAYMON, will answer, GIL PRAGMA BURTHON MACHATAN DENNAH. *We are the three mighty Hunters of the North in the Kingdom of Fiacim, and are come hither by the sound of thy Conjurations, to which we swear by him that liveth to yield obedience, if Judas that betrayed him be not named.*

Then shall the Magician swear, *By him that liveth, and by all that is contained in this holy Book, I swear unto you this night, and by the mysteries of this action, I swear unto you this night, and by the bonds of darkness I swear unto you this night, That Judas the Traitor shall not be named, and that blood shall not be offered unto you, but that truce and equal terms shall be observed betwixt us.* Which being said, the Spirits will bow down their heads to the Horses crests, and then alighting down will call their Herald to withdraw their Horses; which done, The Magician may begin to bargain with all, or any one of them, as a familiar invisibly to attend him, or to answer all difficulties that he propoundeth: Then may he begin to ask them of the frame of the World, and the Kingdoms therein contained, which are unknown unto Geographers: He may also be informed of all Physical processes and operations; also how to go invisible and fly through the airy Region: They can likewise give unto him the powerful Girdle of Victory, teaching him how to compose and consecrate the same, which hath the force, being tyed about him, to make him conquer Armies, and all men whatsoever. Besides, there is not any King or Emperour throughout the world; but if he desires it, they will engage to bring him the most pretious of their Jewels and Riches in twenty four hours; discovering also unto him the way of finding hidden treasures and the richest mines.

And after the Conjurer hath fulfilled his desires, he shall dismiss the aforesaid Spirits in the following form:

*I charge you ye three officious Spirits to depart unto the place whence ye were called, without injury to either man or Beast, leaving the tender Corn untouched, and the seed unbruised; I dismiss you, and licence you to*

go back untill I call you, and to be always ready at my desire, especially thou nimble BATHIN, whom I have chosen to attend me, that thou be alwayes ready when I ring a little Bell to present thy self without any Magical Ceremonies performed; and so depart ye from hence, and peace be betwixt you and us, In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

When the Magician hath repeated this last form of dismission, he will hear immediately a horn winding, after which the Herald with the jet black Horses, and the three Spirits will mount upon them, compassing the Circle seven times, with the Herald winding his horn before them, and at every Candle they will bow towards the Horses crest, till coming towards the Northern quarter, they will with great obeysance seem to march away out through the solid wall as through a City gate.<sup>1</sup>

One is brought up with a start by the 'solid wall', having completely forgotten that this scene was being enacted in a 'fair Parlour', or even in a cellar. Magic or not, one has been transported into the world of chivalry and romance, into the world of *The Fairy Queen*. One rubs one's eyes. What has happened to the *Lemegeton*? English imagination and fancy have been at work upon it, transposing the wearisome ceremonial of the initial stages into the body of the rite, dramatizing, poetizing, romanticizing it. Hideous monsters and ungainly shapes have yielded pride of place to coursing hounds and jet black chargers. And the drama played out with recalcitrant spirits in the *Lemegeton* has been raised to a higher level, dignified and ennobled. Anti-Scot's spirits are imbued with chivalrous notions, and would never be coerced by roastings. Truce and equal terms must be offered to them, the Traitor's name must not be mentioned in their hearing, and no blood-sacrifice must defile them.

It is an extraordinary experience to follow the dark trail of ritual magic from the Continent (and notably from Germany) to England, and to find oneself escaping from puerility and squalor into poetry, fairy-tales and romance. Even the ghoulish nature of the necromantic rites does not seriously diminish, and for some minds may even increase the fascination with which the *Discouerie* as a whole endowed the literature of ceremonial magic. It had been no part of the original author's intentions to do this. On the contrary his aim and object in writing the book was to discredit, belittle and ridicule the whole phenomenon of witchcraft and

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. pp. 218-20.



magic. But his influence on the Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan dramatists was the very reverse of disillusioning. For, although he had drawn the material he ridiculed from his learned Continental predecessors in the field, ranging back to remote antiquity and Biblical themes, he also combined this book-learning with first-hand observation of the craft as practised in the English countryside. To the glamour of what was old and strange the incalculable power of traditional folk-lore was added, making his book a fount of inspiration for the poets even more than a source-book, let alone the monument of enlightenment for which it was intended. That aspect of his work took considerably longer to penetrate, and in a way it was his own fault. For the quotations from Chaucer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace and scores of other poets (tunefully 'Englished' by Abraham Fleming when in a foreign idiom) were warranted to fire the imagination of his contemporaries, whose love of the exotic and the fantastic was only equalled by their deep instinctive feeling for their native traditions. It mattered little to the poets whether or not Scot had unmasked witchcraft and magic: he had given them raw material for poetry:

The Receipt [for the transportation of witches] is as followeth:

*The fat of young children, and seeth it with water in a brazen vessel, reserving the thickest of that which remaineth boyled in the bottome, which they lay up and keep, until occasion serveth to use it. They put hereunto Eleoselinum, Aconitum, Frondes populeas, Mountain parsly, Wolvesbane, leaves of the Poplar and Soot.*

Another Receipt to the same purpose:

*Sium, Acarum vulgare, Pentaphyllon, yellow Water-cresses, common Acorus, Cinquefoil, the blood of a Flitter-Mouse, Solanum Somniferum & oleum, Sleeping Nightshade and Oyle.*<sup>1</sup> *Pythagoras and Democritus* give us the names of a great many Magical herbes and stones...: as *Marmaritin*, whereby Spirits might be raised: *Archimedes*, which would make one bewray in his sleep, all the secrets in his heart, *Adincantida, Calicia, Mevais, Chirocineta, &c.*<sup>2</sup>

HECATE: There take this unbaptized brat:

Boil it well—preserve the fat:

You know 'tis precious to transfer

Our 'nointed flesh into the air,

In moonlight nights, on steeple tops,

Mountains and pine trees...

<sup>1</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 66.

## THE ART IN ENGLAND

STADLIN: Where be the magical herbs?

HECATE: They're down his throat,  
His mouth cramm'd full; his ears and nostrils stuff'd.  
I thrust in eleoselinum, lately  
Aconitum, frondes populeas, and soot.  
You may see that, he looks so black i' th' mouth.  
Then sium, acorum vulgare too,  
Pentaphyllon, the blood of a flitter-mouse,  
Solanum somnificum et oleum.

HECATE: .....  
.....I could give thee  
chiroconeta, adicantida,  
Archimedon, marmaritin, calicia,  
Which I could sort to villanous barren ends;  
But this leads the same way.<sup>1</sup>

This particularly straightforward example of direct borrowing could be paralleled by others; but is less important fundamentally than the pervasive yet incalculable inspiration of Scot's *Discouerie*, which however is to be found affecting the poetry of witchcraft more discernibly than that of ritual magic. The conjuration scenes in *Henry VI* and in *Faustus* are based rather on current ideas than on the rites communicated by Scot. These on the other hand returned like a boomerang in the pages of Anti-Scot, charged with all the glamour which his predecessor had shed over the whole subject. Ritual magic, ever on the way towards art, had made but a laboured progress in France, stumbling, slipping and sliding backwards; it had plunged headlong downwards in Germany into the bottomless pit of the *Harrowing of Hell*. It achieved almost complete aesthetic transformation in England in the year 1665. Glancing backwards to the *Clavicles*, to the *Grand Grimoire*, to 'Honorius' and to 'Faust', the student of magic realizes that Anti-Scot has led him into a totally different world, away from frantic, misguided, practical endeavour into a sphere of make-believe. For most of us to-day neither has any firm basis in reality; but Anti-Scot, if read disinterestedly, induces suspension of disbelief.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Middleton, *The Witch*, Act I, Scene 2, ed. Bullen, London, 1895, v, pp. 366ff. and 375.

## (c) The Magus

The complacency which this contribution to ceremonial magic may engender in English readers will be rudely shattered by even a cursory glance at the next item on the programme, *The Magus*, by Francis Barrett. The title-page alone is enough to cause serious misgivings. Anything so exhaustive promises to be exhausting; and experience has taught one to fight shy of the Kabbala.

This impressive title-page is fully borne out by the contents of the book, which is an abysmally learned treatise on all the aspects of magic enumerated. It is presented in an educated and discursive manner, conveying much of indisputable interest to the serious student of magic, but (in strong contrast to Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*) highly unlikely to inspire poets. And the serious student, although probably grateful to have so much information collected together between the covers of one book, will have met most of it before. For *The Magus* is a text-book of the science of magic, a comprehensive recapitulation of the theory as it had been actually or supposedly evolved in antiquity and handed down to succeeding ages, with special attention given to the Kabbala. In spite of the lucidity and even persuasiveness of the style, I doubt whether many modern readers will stay the course to the end of the tome. Unlike Lévi, who is supposed to have owed a great debt to Barrett, the author does not succeed in being readable. On the contrary, all that is abstruse, wearisome, indigestible, unconvincing, unintelligible and even twaddling predominates in his pages. Nor does he advance the art of ceremonial magic by one iota. The processes which he gives, including the advice and general instructions, are taken bodily, although without acknowledgements, from 'Agrippa's' *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, from the *Heptameron* (or *Magical Elements*) of 'Abano' with some additions from the *Lemegeton*, and information about angelic and other spirits from the *Schemhamphoras* or some closely related source. Barrett may therefore have brought about a revival of these classical rituals; he contributed nothing to them, save in one respect.

The tendency of magic to become art was stronger even than Barrett's determination to present it to his contemporaries in the guise of a highly practical science. Not only did he give (in the

THE  
**MAGUS,**  
OR  
**CELESTIAL INTELLIGENCER;**  
BEING  
A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF  
OCCULT PHILOSOPHY.

—●●●—  
IN THREE BOOKS:

Containing the Antient and Modern Practice of the Cabalistic Art, Natural and Celestial Magic, &c.; showing the wonderful Effects that may be performed by a Knowledge of the

*Celestial Influences, the occult Properties of Metals, Herbs, and Stones,*

AND THE

APPLICATION OF ACTIVE TO PASSIVE PRINCIPLES.

EXHIBITING

THE SCIENCES OF NATURAL MAGIC;

*Alchymy, or Hermetic Philosophy;*

ALSO

THE NATURE, CREATION, AND FALL OF MAN;

His natural and supernatural Gifts; the magical Power inherent in the Soul, &c.; with a great Variety of rare Experiments in Natural Magic;

THE CONSTELLATORY PRACTICE, or TALISMANIC MAGIC;

The Nature of the Elements, Stars, Planets, Signs, &c.; the Construction and Composition of all Sorts of Magic Seals, Images, Rings, Glasses, &c.;

The Virtue and Efficacy of Numbers, Characters, and Figures, of good and evil Spirits.

**MAGNETISM,**

AND CABALISTICAL OR CEREMONIAL MAGIC;

In which the secret Mysteries of the Cabala are explained; the Operations of good and evil Spirits; all Kinds of Cabalistic Figures, Tables, Seals, and Names, with their Use, &c.

THE TIMES, BONDS, OFFICES, AND CONJURATION OF SPIRITS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

*Biographia Antiqua, or the Lives of the most eminent Philosophers, Magi, &c.*

The Whole Illustrated with a great Variety of

CURIOUS ENGRAVINGS, MAGICAL AND CABALISTICAL FIGURES, &c.

—●●●—  
BY FRANCIS BARRETT, F.R.C.

Professor of Chemistry, natural and occult Philosophy, the Cabala, &c. &c.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO., TEMPLE OF THE MUSES,  
FINSBURY SQUARE,  
1801.

Title page of Francis Barrett's *The Magus or Celestial Intelligencer*

interests of utilitarianism) amongst the many seals, figures, Kabbalistic diagrams and tables, none of which appear to be original, a coloured specimen of the Book of Spirits, open at the page of the angel of Saturday, Cassiel, in which this rather questionable spirit of 'Abano's' is seen with scales and claws riding on a dragon; he also designed, and a certain R. Griffith either engraved, or in other cases was credited with executing in sculpture, ten portraits of notable fiends called Fallen Angels, Vessels of Wrath (or Iniquity) and Evil Daemons. Their names are APOLLYON, THEUTUS, ASMODEUS, THE INCUBUS, OPHIS, ANTICHRIST, ASTAROTH, ABBADON, MAMMON, the first portrait being merely labelled A DECEIVER. These flights of pictorial or plastic fancy on the part of Barrett are certainly on a higher imaginative level than those of 'Faust'; and both Ophis and Astaroth are extremely horrible; according to the author the former was mentioned by Pherycies the Assyrian as the devilish serpent, the head of the rebellious angels. Theutus, whom Burton called Theuth and identified with Apollo Pythius, may be a corruption of Thoth. If more unnerving than the Faustian spirits of evil, they were perhaps not quite so ghastly and gruesome as those in a manuscript of Elizabethan black magic which was sold by Maggs in 1929, and evidently contained most fearful and wonderful likenesses, incredibly bestial and grotesque, of VERCAN REX, MAYMON REX, SUTH REX, SAMAX REX, SARABOTRES REX, MEDIAC or MODIAC REX and ARCAN REX. To put the crowning touch of horror to these portraits of fiends, we are solemnly told, 'by one who saw the grimoire', that they were drawn from life!<sup>1</sup>

Barrett made no such dangerous claim, which would indeed have been greatly at variance with the lofty tone of high spiritual endeavour prevailing throughout his work and emphasized in the *Advertisement* at the end of the main portion of the book:

*The Author of this work respectfully informs those who are curious in the studies of Art and Nature, especially of Natural and Occult Philosophy, Chemistry, Astrology, &c. &c. that, having been indefatigable in his researches into those sublime Sciences, of which he has treated at large in this Book, that he gives private instructions and lectures upon any of the*

<sup>1</sup> Montague Summers, *Witchcraft and Black Magic*, London, 1945, p. 142.



*The Saint  
Antichrist*



*Revised*



above-mentioned Sciences; in the course of which he will discover many curious and rare experiments. Those who become Students will be initiated into the choicest operations of Natural Philosophy, Natural Magic, the Cabala, Chemistry, the Talismanic Art, Hermetic Philosophy, Astrology, Physiognomy, &c. &c. Likewise they will acquire the knowledge of the RITES, MYSTERIES, CEREMONIES and PRINCIPLES of the ancient Philosophers, Magi, Cabalists, Adepts, &c.—The purpose of this School (which will consist of no greater number than Twelve Students) being to investigate the hidden treasures of Nature; to bring the mind to a contemplation of the ETERNAL WISDOM; to promote the discovery of whatever may conduce to the perfection of Man; the alleviating the miseries and calamities of this life, both in respect of ourselves and others; to secure to ourselves felicity hereafter; and finally the promulgation of whatever may conduce to the general happiness and welfare of mankind.—Those who feel themselves thoroughly disposed to enter upon such a course of studies, as is above recited, with the same principles of philanthropy with which the Author invites the lovers of philosophy and wisdom, to incorporate themselves in so select, permanent, and desirable a society, may speak with the Author upon the subject, at any time between the hours of Eleven and Two o'clock, at 99, Norton Street, Mary-le-Bonne.

*Letters (post paid) upon any subject treated in this Book, will be duly answered, with the necessary information.*<sup>1</sup>

Some flies must surely have walked into the Marylebone parlour; and it is more than possible that the occult society grouped in a later decade round Bulwer Lytton had its inception at 99, Norton Street. According to Summers (as learned in the whole subject as he was almost unbelievably credulous) it had other repercussions:

I have been told that Francis Barrett actually founded a small sodality of students of these dark and deep mysteries, and that under his tuition—for he was profoundly learned in these things—some advanced far upon the path of transcendental wisdom. One at least was a Cambridge man, of what status—whether an undergraduate or the Fellow of a College—I do not know, but there is reason to believe that he initiated others, and until quite recent years—it perhaps persists even to-day—the Barrett tradition was maintained at Cambridge, but very privately, and his teaching has been handed on to promising subjects.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barrett, op. cit. II, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Summers, op. cit. pp. 161 f.



## EXPONENTS OF THE ART

(a) *The Magic Crystal*

There must have been a strong tradition in Elizabethan England that the crystal was the magical medium *par excellence*; for T. R.'s rites, communicated by Scot in 1584, revolve round the crystal or its equivalent, and the operations conducted by John Dee (1527-1608) and Edward Kelley (c. 1554-95) were one long series of experiments in crystal-gazing, made during the years 1582-7. But there the resemblance ends. All three were evidently drawing on a common stock of magical lore; but T. R. seemed unaware of his colleagues in practical crystallomancy, and Dee and Kelley did not use his texts. They went their own strange way, and an arduous way it was. Even the Solomonick handbooks with their fearsome preliminary instructions fail to give quite such an appalling impression of the labour involved in practising magic as the *True and Faithful Relation of what Passed For many Years Between Doctor John Dee and Some Spirits*, and this in spite of the fact that the preparation for the actions was of the simplest, consisting merely of the setting up of the crystal or shew-stone in a frame on the table of practice and of some short though fervent prayers uttered by Dr Dee. It would seem to be, and in a sense it was, crystal-gazing made easy; but this did not make for an easy life; and unless one plods conscientiously through the folio volume in question, which runs into five hundred pages, for the most part very closely and shockingly badly printed, one will never really know what hardships, tribulations, trials and even dangers Dee and Kelley encountered during the years 1582-7 when they were involved with the spiritual creatures who answered to the stone. This is one of those stories which cannot be told at second-hand. One must submit to the experience offered by the record of it, if one is to gain inside knowledge of what magicians, whether they be *bonafide* or bogus, are called upon to face. As regards the genuineness of the manifestations, we have only Kelley's word for that; for Dee confessed that he neither saw nor

heard anything during the actions; and yet he conducted them: asking the questions, and at the same time taking the most minute notes of what Kelley reported.

The latter must certainly be held ultimately responsible for everything that happened; and it could undoubtedly have been one long-drawn-out, gigantic fraud practised by the magician on Dee; and moreover a fool-proof fraud, since (unlike the unhappy Madame Blavatsky with the Masters) Kelley was never in any danger of being asked to produce ocular or oral evidence of what he was reporting. Yet I believe that the generally accepted view of downright and conscious trickery is an over-simplification, which distorts the truth. Kelley's perpetual protests that the spirits who appeared to him were diabolic and not angelic; his recurrent attempts to run away and his repeated refusals to go on 'skrying' are supposed by those who support the theory of fraud to have been so many clever dodges to keep Dee's interest at fever-pitch. But that pious scholar was fanatically enthusiastic and certainly needed no bait of any sort to continue with the sittings. On the contrary, the only motive that might have made him abandon them would have been genuine doubts as to the nature of the spirits raised. He never felt any. He was ready, he assured Kelley, to pawn his soul that the apparitions were angelic. It was the magician who was constantly assailed by doubts which the Doctor had to allay. And Kelley, on this particular subject if on no other, was by far the more dependable of the two. Not only could he see the spiritual creatures and hear their voices (granted that they were there to see and hear), but he also knew much more about black magic than was good for him. This becomes clear during the actions; and, before his association with Dee, he had, according to Casaubon, on one occasion at least practised the abhorred art of necromancy:

This Diabolical questioning of the dead, for the knowledge of future accidents, was put in practice by the said *Kelley*, who upon a certain Night, in the Park of *Walton in le dale*, in the County of *Lancaster*, with one *Paul Waring* (his fellow-companion in such Deeds of darkness), invoked some one of the Infernal Regiment, to know certain passages in the life, as also what might be known by the Divels foresight, of the manner and time of the death of a Noble yong Gentleman, as then in Wardship. The Black Ceremonies of that Night being ended, *Kelley*

demande of one of the Gentlemen servants, what *Corse* was the last, buried in *Law Church-yard*, a Church thereunto adjoyning, who told him of a poor man that was buried there but the same day. *He* and the said *Waring*, intreated this foresaid servant to go with them to the Grave of the man so lately interred, which he did; and withal, did help them to dig up the Carcase of the poor Caitiff, whom by their Incantations, they made him (or rather some evil Spirit through his Organs) to speak, who delivered strange Predictions concerning the said Gentleman. I was told thus much by the said Serving-man, a Secondary Actor in that dismal abhorred business....<sup>1</sup>

Kelley was from beginning to end a highly ambiguous personage, and unstable as water. He was prone to fearful fits of wrath and terrifying temperamental outbursts often accompanied by physical violence; he was also liable to sudden spiritual conversions, when he confessed his former wickedness and promised amendment, only to slip back again into evil ways. Undoubtedly his conscience tormented him spasmodically, and then he became restive on the subject of the spiritual creatures, with whom throughout the course of the actions he was in more or less open conflict:

HOW CAN YOU PERSWADE ME THAT YE BE NO  
DELUDERS?<sup>2</sup>

he asked them very early on in the series of sittings; and they never really persuaded him that they were not, or at least never for long. He upset Dee very much when they were in Cracow in April 1584 by repeating more emphatically what he had said two days before; that

our Teachers were deluders, and no good, or sufficient Teachers, who had not in two years space made us able to understand, or do somewhat: and that he could in two years have learned all the seven Liberal sciences, if he had first learned Logick, etc. wherefore he would have no more to do with them in any manner of way, wished himself in *England*, and said that... he had written to my Lord (by *Pirmis*) that he took our Teachers to be deceivers, and wicked, and no good Creatures

<sup>1</sup> M. Casaubon, ed., *A True and Faithful Relation of what Passed For many Years Between Doctor John Dee and Some Spirits*, 1659; postscript to the Preface, pages not numbered. This is the method described by Lucan, Scot and Anti-Scot.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 20; June 15, 1583, at Mortlake.

of God, with many such speeches, and reasons (as he thought) of force to diswade himself from any more dealing with them: But willed me to use *John* my Boy as my Skryer, for that these spiritual Creatures were not bound to him, etc. . . . God lighten his heart with knowledge of the truth, if it be his Divine will and pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

Two days later, Kelley's scruples having been partly overcome, Dee tried to hasten the lightening of his skryer's heart by putting the following question to the spirits Gabriel and Nalvage who were reasoning with the magician:

I beseech you as concerning the powder whereof he thinketh that he hath made due assay of it, as if it should have been the Philosopher's Stone, and so affirmed to be, by the minister of this action? I beseech you so to answer, the thing as his reason may be satisfied.

They gave no answer hereunto. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The *casus belli* between Kelley and the spiritual creatures on this occasion was evidently their failure to help him forward with the Great Work, on which both men were continually engaged; and even the irrational Kelley could hardly blame the spirits for this if he knew that they were the children of his own brain. He was still not pacified a month later:

There happened a great storm or temptation to E. K. of doubting and misliking our Instructors and their doings, and of contemning and condemning any thing that I knew or could do. I bare all things patiently for God his sake, etc. At length the Curtain was opened, and they appeared.

E. K. I AM CONTENTED TO<sup>3</sup>SEE, AND TO MAKE TRUE REPORT OF WHAT THEY WILL SHEW; BUT MY HEART STANDETH AGAINST THEM.<sup>3</sup>

The ensuing action did nothing to reconcile him; on the contrary it hardened him in his determination to discontinue the sittings; for he discovered in one of Cornelius Agrippa's books the selfsame geographical description of the world (taken from Ptolemy) which the spirits had been revealing to them during the *séance*. So much shaken was the skryer by this evidence of spiritual plagiarism, that he resolved to escape '*secretly by the help spiritual*

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 91; April 19, 1584, in Cracow.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 92; April 21, 1584, in Cracow.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 153; May 23, 1584, in Cracow.

of those, with whom he had so long dealt', that is to say the confessedly evil spirits with whom he was still on terms; but this plan was frustrated by one of his apparently genuine but always short-lived conversions, during which he confessed his treacherous design to Dee, also confiding to him piteously that he had continued his connexion with the wicked spirits, because they threatened him with beggary if he deserted them, the thing of all others he most hated and feared. Now, however, his heart was changed, so that he

...made more account of God his favour and life eternal, then he doth of all transitory wealth and riches, and to be entangled within the danger of these wicked spirits their snares, with all... And as for the issue of these actions *he would never* either doubt, or mislike, howsoever they fell out...<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, poor Dee's prayerful outpourings of gratitude for this change of heart were premature. On June 22 Kelley was again assailed with great temptations not to credit an action which had taken place two days before. Worse still, his indifference to 'transitory wealth and riches' was deserting him, and well he knew that if the apparitions he was raising were really good, he would get no financial aid from them:

Moreover he could not be persuaded by me that *good Angels would undertake* to help us to any *relief by money* or treasure: affirming that it appertained to the wicked ones: seeing they were the Lords of this World; and the kingdom of God was not of this World, etc.<sup>2</sup>

This was good orthodox magical doctrine, and one can sympathize with Kelley's dilemma, for the apparitions were exceedingly lavish with promises of great wealth. Either therefore they were evil spirits, or else rank deluders, and he was never quite certain which. His rare contributions to the conversations which these ambiguous beings held with Dr Dee were almost exclusively confined to efforts to catch them out, or else to drive them into a corner on the subject of that material assistance of which both he and Dee stood so sorely in need. There is a refreshing absence of sanctimoniousness in his irritable interruptions; and as a practitioner of the Black Art the expedient of bullragging evil or

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 165; June 8, 1584, in Cracow.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 171; June 22 and 23, 1584, in Cracow.

doubtful spirits would be second nature to him. Taking it all in all, therefore, he was probably telling the truth when he burst out:

I EVER TOLD YOU I DO NOT BELIEVE THEM, NOR CAN BELIEVE THEM, NOR WILL DESIRE TO BELIEVE THEM.<sup>1</sup>

If Kelley genuinely disliked the sittings and despised the spiritual creatures, why did he continue to skry for Dee during so many years, often without raising any protest, and never really protesting effectively? To begin with, because he was hired to do so; and, being entirely destitute, was dependent on the Doctor for board and lodging, even if he did not always receive the sum of £50 a year, for which his services were bought. But there was more to it than that. He had somewhere discovered and acquired a book (said to be by St Dunstan) and certain powders by means of which he hoped, probably with Dee's help, to complete the Great Work, the fabulous Philosopher's Stone. This, say the sceptics, is why the spiritual creatures were continually driving Dee from one European Court to the next. Kelley was aiming at securing royal or princely patronage in the shape of hard cash for the fearfully costly experiments alchemy demands. Or, say the even more cynical, his interest in the Philosopher's Stone was merely another bunch of carrots dangled before the good Doctor's nose. This I think is going too far; but the first hypothesis is probably true, although I doubt if it is the whole truth of a most baffling situation. Kelley may have begun his skrying with this end solely in view and he never lost sight of it; but he seems to have been a genuine clairvoyant, and the crystal kept on defeating him. Not that I am asserting the objective reality of the apparitions Kelley said that he saw and heard in and around the shew-stone; even though this famous angelical stone had been handed to Dee by the angel Uriel in person, a very tall story to swallow. But the hypnotic effect of crystal-gazing is notorious, and I believe that this extraordinary magician was more often than not partially at least hallucinated. His own desires, base and ignoble enough, but fierce and ravenous; Dee's abnormal spiritual avidity; and a third factor—the religious rebel in Kelley reaching out to rebellious forces elsewhere; all probably played their part in producing those shows and voices which by no means always or even generally went

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, *op. cit.* p. 186; June 30, 1584, in Cracow.

according to the skryer's plan. He was intent on one thing; Dee was intent on something else; between them they generated a third potency, transcending both, soaring into altitudes far beyond the Doctor's range, and much more sinister in intention than Kelley when he questioned that poor corpse. Such at least is the final impression of this well-nigh indecipherable book, the cumulative effect of a series of actions, few indeed of which will stand the test of critical common-sense. And yet through the fog of folly enveloping the whole one senses a spirit of destructiveness and disruption, masquerading as the desire to establish a new world-order through the instrumentality first of Albert Laski, Prince of Siradia in Poland, then of the Emperor Rudolf II, then of King Stephen of Poland, and finally of Prince Rosenberg; although it must never be forgotten that from Kelley's point of view political revolution and spiritual regeneration played second fiddle throughout to the *désir désiré* or Philosopher's Stone. As for Dee, he was in a perpetual seventh heaven because of the piety of the language ('sermon-like stuff' as Casaubon truly calls it), for which in an indirect way he was probably responsible himself.

The cloudy mysticism of the language, the apocalyptic nature of the prophecies, the perpetual Biblical reminiscences, the insistence of godliness, regeneration and reform, the lamentations and denunciations of the wickedness of the world might well have addled clearer heads than Dee's as to the outcome of the alterations and destructions of states which the spirits were advocating. And if it is difficult to believe that the devout twaddle, rant and fustian into which the would-be sublimity too often degenerated emanated from spiritual beings, it is also not easy to rhyme this time-wasting spate of lofty inanities with the theory of a crafty, deeply-plotting brain intent on acquiring money. The guile and the craft were there in Kelley's conscious mind, but subconscious layers rose up to confound and thwart him as he gazed into the crystal: Dee's inordinate spiritual aspirations contending with his own dark mysticism. On this level the series of actions recorded in the *Relation* appears like a prolonged dramatic wrangle between the black magician, Edward Kelley, and the white magician, Dr Dee.

It came to a real crisis or climax in Cracow in May 1584, after several minor tussles, such as the occasion when the spirit called

Madimi cast fifteen evil spirits out of Kelley, branded them and bade them begone with the words:

*Depart unto the last Cry: Rest with the Prince of Darknesse there is none. Amen, go you thither. Et signabo vos ad finem.*<sup>1</sup>

But this was only a prologue to the conflict engaged between the angel Gabriel and Kelley on the subject of his magical books. After a long parable about serpents and shingles choking a fountain directed against the magician, Gabriel brought his harangue to a close with these words:

*Let the Shingles and Serpents be separated, that the Fountain may feed as before. All the trash that thou hast of the wicked, burn it.*

E. K. I DO NOT KNOW, THEY ARE WICKED.

... Their doings with thee, are the hindrance of the Will of God, and therefore they are wicked.

... *Thou hast given judgement against thy self: Take heed thou offend not thy own soul.*

Δ. Send down thy Spirit O Lord, and illuminate E. K. his heart with perceiving of his wrong opinion, etc.

E. K. IF MOSES AND DANIEL WERE SKILFUL IN THE ARTS OF THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS, AND WERE NOT THEREBY HINDRED FOR BEING THE SERVANTS OF GOD, WHY MAY NOT I DEAL WITH THESE, WITHOUT HINDRANCE TO THE WILL OF GOD?

... *Darknesse yeilded unto light; the Greater excluded the lesser. The more a man knoweth wickedness, the more he shall hate it, being called back. The more they knew the shadow, so much more they delighted in the body: For the doings of the Egyptians, seem, and are not so. The doings of the Lord are, and continue... Stand up and look into the whole World, into her youth, and middle age, for they are past. Where are the monuments that Satan hath builded?*

E. K. HATH SATAN BUILDED ANY MONUMENTS?

This brought Gabriel up standing, for he had meant to imply that Satan's buildings had vanished from the world; and was now obliged to acknowledge their continuance, unless he were to own that none had ever been erected. He wriggled out of the difficulty, however, executing a complete *volte-face* with a good deal of *aplomb*:

... *Yes: Hath he not builded him a Fort upon the whole Earth? Hath he not the victory over the Saints? Dwelleth he not in the Temple of the Highest? Triumpheth he not in the Cities of the whole World?*

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 32; July 4, 1583, at Mortlake.



## RITUAL MAGIC

Yes... But without comfort, are his victories: without pleasure his dwelling places. For he knoweth his time is at hand... Compare the Earth (into the which the Devil is thrust as into his dwelling), with the Heavens, which are provided for the holy. Consider the pain of the one, and the pleasure of the other: The seat of Gods Justice, and Fountain of his Mercy: The Cave of Darknesse, and the Diadem of Light. And then cry, wo, wo, wo, unto such as erre, and whose lives are but shadows: For their Felicity is such, as from whence it came; and their reward is all one, with the spirit and prince of Darknesse..... But, this sayeth the Lord. I deal with you as a Childe: But the vessels that I must use, must be pure and clean.

Δ. Cleanse thou us (O Lord), *Cor mundum Crea in nobis; Crea.*  
.....

GAB. Consider with thy self: for the Lord speaketh not once more, till thou hast fulfilled thy own judgement.

E.K. I WILL BE CONTENTED TO BURY THEM IN THE FIELD, AND NOT TO USE THEM, OR COME AT THEM: AND THAT I WILL SWEAR UPON THE BIBLE TO PERFORM: AND IF THEY BE EARTHLY, I WILL COMMIT THEM TO THE EARTH....

Because thou art content to bury them; and withall, upon faith in the promise of God, to abjure them in simplicity of heart, and external use... simply, as a true meaning before the face of the highest: The Lord accepteth it, and it shall be sufficient.

Further, thou hast 27. Confirmations of sin, and consent with the Devil, which your intention calleth Characters, whereby those seven and twenty (like unto their mother), are become familiar and pleasant with thee, they must be brought before the Lord: and offered into his hands. For so long as they are, the wicked alwayes vex thee: For the Obligation burnt, the condition is void. These must be buried with the rest.

[E.K. WHICH REST?]

... But must be brought, and burnt here before the presence of God: That, the cause diminished, the effect may perish.

E.K. I WILL BE CONTENTED TO BURY THEM LIKEWISE, BESEECHING THE ALMIGHTY TO ACCEPT OF MY INTENT HEREIN, AS OF THE REST BEFORE SPECIFIED.

... He is contented; but let one be burnt. You may suffer one to testifie the discredit of the rest. It is but according to the grounds of thy own Magick.

E.K. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR MEANING HEREIN.

GAB. *Radius partis*, may be *sicut totius corporis*.

E.K. I UNDERSTAND NOT THAT, ALSO.

## EXPONENTS OF THE ART

GAB. *Magick worketh effect in things absent, that it doth in their parts, being present.*<sup>1</sup>

Gabriel's victory was one in name only. Instead of a holocaust of the books and characters, he merely obtained Kelley's promise to bury them and not to use them again, and the reluctant consent to a token burning of one of the characters. Kelley was obviously very suspicious on this score, and wrung from Gabriel the admission that in magic what you do to the part, you do to the whole, the doctrine of sympathetic magic, which would deprive the buried characters, if not the books, of their virtue. The magician was therefore in a very surly mood when the ritual burning took place a week later. He told Dee rather evasively that he had done with the 'trash' what he thought would be acceptable to the Lord; and as he had left one of the twenty-seven characters with the Doctor at the end of the last action, it was now ready to be burnt. He then looked into the crystal, and Gabriel and Nalvage appeared:

Δ. Will you that I shall now execute this burning of the Character here as a sacrifice (to the highest) of our humility and obedience?

GAB. *Not as a sacrifice, but as a victory.*

Δ. Shall I then do it, I pray you? As with the consent of my yoke-fellow, and so all one to be taken as his action.

...*He that doth righteously offereth up a sacrifice.*

NAL. *It is true, that he that is obedient, and doth well, is accepted with the Lord.*

E. K. I DID TAKE SACRIFICE TO BE ONELY WITH BLOUD.

GAB. *This is a sacrifice, because it is done righteously.*

E. K. YOU SAID, NOT, AS A SACRIFICE, BUT AS A VICTORY.

GAB. *He that overcometh his enemy rejoiceth not for friendship sake, but for victory....Thou openest thy mouth and sayest before the Lord, The spirit of God hath descended.*

Δ. Gloria Patri, etc.

*And he hath entred into judgement with me, and I am condemned. But where Justice dwelleth, dwelleth also mercy. For, my Idolatry is forgotten before the Lord.*

E. K. HAVE YOU COMMITTED IDOLATRY?

Δ. He speaketh in your behalf Master Kelly.

.....  
GAB. *Art thou contented to consent hereunto?*

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. pp. 116f.; May 7, 1584, in Cracow.

E.K. WHAT I HAVE DONE WITH THE REST, GOD, AND THEY (IF THEY BE OF GOD) KNOW: UPON THE FORESAID CONDITIONS I AM CONTENTED TO HAVE THIS CHARACTER TO BE BURNT. LET IT BE BURNT.

Δ. I burnt it immediately, with the flame of brimstone, and brought the burnt black coal or cinder thereof to the Table, and laid it on a paper.

*Now O Lord, darknesse is confounded, let thy light shine in us, and thy truth prevaile.*

GAB. *It is well.*<sup>1</sup>

These two scenes, illustrating Kelley's truculence with the spiritual creatures and their spitefulness with him (about the 'victory'), seem to vouch for the fact that for the magician at least (for Dee hardly counts) they possessed objective reality; his conflict with them, coming to a head on this occasion, was a projection of his own inner conflict and of the spiritual antagonism he felt for Dr Dee, symbolized by the fate of the magical books, for whose destruction there were many precedents. According to legend, Solomon burned his books on magic before his death; an alternative version states that the fiends who were subject to him buried magical books beneath his throne in order to bring him into bad odour with posterity. Simon Magus cast his into the sea lest Peter should find them and convict him of sorcery; Roger Bacon followed the example of Solomon, and publicly committed his works on magic to the flames; Saint-Germain was rumoured to have destroyed his occult treatise *La Très Sainte Trinosophie* before his end; Cagliostro's work on Egyptian Freemasonry was requisitioned when he was arrested and burnt by the Holy Office; and Prospero vowed to drown his book 'deeper than did ever plummet sound'. The burning or drowning of magical books in spiritual crises, or in emergencies, or by enemies is a well-known expedient in story and in life. Nalvage and Gabriel were aiming at nothing less, but had to be content with a declaration that they should be buried, and with a scoffing statement that this had been done; whilst the 'character', as defined by the spirits, seemed in fact to have been one of several agreements with the devil, which the burning would render null and void. One thing emerges clearly from all the wrangling between Kelley and the spirits on the subject: he was certainly in possession of Black Books.

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. pp. 118f.; May 14, 1584, in Cracow.

Owing to a gap of many months in the records between September 1585 and the end of April 1586, it is impossible to say under what pressure or in the throes of what crisis Dee burnt all his books on April 10, 1586. He was not left long to repine for them however, for on April 30 they were miraculously restored to him in the garden of the castle of Trebona, where, seeing some paper fluttering about,

I rose and went to it, and (to the prayse of God his truth and powre), there I found three of my Books lying, which were so diligently burnt the tenth day of April last.

1. The three Books were, *Enoch his Book*.
2. The 48 *Claves Angelicae*.
3. And the third was the Book of my gathering of the thirty Aires, and entitled *Liber Scientiae terrestris auxilii & victoriae*.<sup>1</sup>

About half an hour later Kelley was conducted by a spiritual creature to the furnace where all the books and papers had been burnt and from which the obliging spirit now retrieved the rest, absolutely uninjured by fire and smoke, and handed them to the magician over his shoulder. This 'miracle' would be considerably more impressive if Dee had stated categorically that he had seen the volumes in question consumed before his own eyes. As he did not, one diagnoses fraud, since Kelley was as crooked as sin, and since by the time one has reached page 418 of the *True Relation*, one is in no state of mind to credit any miracles performed by the spiritual creatures, whether they be called Uriel, Michael and Gabriel; or Madimi and Galvah (both of the female persuasion); or Esemeli, Murifri, Ath and Il; or Jubanladace and Jam; or Moreorgran, Aph, Lasben, Nalvage, Mapsama, Ave, Ilemese, Gaza, Vaa, Levanael and Ben. They were all of them deluders, and terribly broken reeds, great spouters of apocalyptic prophecies and far from niggardly with glittering promises of wealth, and wisdom, and fame:

*Pluck up thy heart and be merry, pine not thy Soul away with inward groanings; for I will open unto thee the secrets of Nature, and the riches of the world, and withal give thee such direction, that shall deliver thee from many infirmities, both of body and minde...open thy mind to desire such things as may advance thy credit, and enrich thy Family. Reap unto thee*

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 418; April 30, 1586, in Trebona.

*many friends, and lift thee up to honour; For I will stir up the mindes of Learned men, the profoundest in the World that they shall visit thee. And I will disclose unto you such things, as shall be wonderfull, and of exceeding profit. Moreover, I will put to my hands, and help your proceedings, that the World may talk of your wisdom hereafter. Therefore wander not farther, into unknown places, contagious, the very seats of death for thee, and thy children, and such as are thy friends... For thou shalt forthwith become rich, and thou shalt be able to enrich Kings, and to help such as are needy. Wast thou not born to use the commodity of this World? Were not all things made for mans use?... What canst thou speak hereunto? Wilt thou thank me for this?*<sup>1</sup>

Dee had little enough cause to thank this speaker, or any other of those who answered to the stone; for never at any time did they render him that help of which they were so constantly assuring him. Indeed their evasiveness when pressed about practical matters was one of their most maddening characteristics; and although this has its amusing side to-day, still one can sympathize with Kelley's exasperation, whilst one's heart bleeds for poor, trusting, deluded and careworn Dee; hopefully asking for help in the matter of one Isabel Lister, tormented by the devil and tempted to slay herself; and for advice in respect of another woman who had hired a cellar in which buried treasure was suspected to be:

MURI. *I answer thee, I will come again soon, and thou shalt receive a Medecine which shall teach thee to work help in the first. The second is vanity, for it is not so, but to the intent that after great hope of this world hath infected the weakling minde: Desperation might have the more open and ready entrance. But yet she shall be comforted for thy sake.*<sup>2</sup>

One can hardly quarrel with Murifri's attitude to buried treasure; moreover, he returned next day and dictated certain letters to be formed on lead and used as a charm on the person of Isabel Lister. But it does not seem to have worked:

Δ. As concerning *Isabel Lister* who is vext of a wicked spirit, how well have I executed that which was prescribed to me; or how well doth it work?

ATH. *Friend, It is not of my charge.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 49; November 15, 1583, in Lübeck.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 5; June 2, 1583, at Mortlake.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 9; June 5, 1583, at Mortlake.

EXPONENTS OF THE ART

Δ. As concerning *Isabel Lister*, I pray in what case is she? in respect of the wicked spirit which hath long molested her?

GAL. *Believe, For that is the chiefest:*

*What is spoken by us we give but our consent to.*

For he that speaketh in us is to be asked no such question.<sup>1</sup>

Δ. Concerning *Charles Sled*, his nose gushing with blood twice yesternight and this morning upon my charitable instructions giving him to vertue and godliness.

GAL. *I know him not: nor any name hath he with us.*<sup>2</sup>

Δ. When, I pray you, is the Duke likely to go away?

MAD. *In the middle of August.*

Δ. If in the midst of *August* he will go, and then our practices be yet in hand, what shall be done with such our furniture is prepared, and standing in the Chamber of practice.

MAD. *Thou hast no faith.*

.....  
Δ. Whether shall it be good, that the Duke resort hither oft, or tarry for the most part at his house at *London*.

MAD. *Humane policie cannot prevail. As many as are not faithfull in these causes, shall die a most miserable death: and shall drink of sleep everlasting. As in one root there are many divisions, so in the stem and branches are many separations.*

Δ. Give some more light (I beseech you) to the particular understanding.<sup>3</sup>

The only light vouchsafed was a sermon on emanations. Nor, in spite of gorgeous promises of stupendous wealth, did the spirits ever show any sympathy for Dee's present needs, rebuking him sternly once through the mouth of Gabriel in these lofty words:

*To talk with God for money is a folly, to talk with God for mercy, is great wisdom,*<sup>4</sup>

an irreproachable sentiment, but according ill with the bait of wealth constantly held out, not to mention the commands issued, which often required formidable funds:

MAD. *My mother sayeth*, you should have been at the Emperours.

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 13; June 14, 1583, at Mortlake.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 17; June 15, 1583, at Mortlake.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 29; July 2, 1583, at Mortlake. The Duke is Albert Laski.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 168; June 18, 1584, in Cracow.

Δ. But you see it is impossible to get thither without some good provision of money made by our great friend *A. L.* . . .

MAD. *My Mother, my Sisters, Ave, Il, my self, and the rest of us will not be from you in your need.*

Δ. Now is our need, as we have declared.

MAD. *Sir, Content your self: For, yet a season, you must have patience. God blesse you, for (as yet) I feel nothing to say to you.*<sup>1</sup>

URIEL. *Silver and Gold I give not: But my blessing, is above the substance of the Earth. Dayes there be, that thou must drink of gall, and a time cometh, when thou shalt drink wine. In the mean season, those that give unto thee, I will multiply all they have with blessing a thousand fold; for those that give unto thee, I will give unto them; And those that pluck back from thee, I will also pluck back from them. Those that are of me, have no spot; for I am all beauty.*

E. K. BUT WILL YOU GIVE US MEAT, DRINK, AND CLOATHING?

[Δ. O Kelly, Kelly in the margin.]<sup>2</sup>

Δ. I presume not to interrupt your discourse of matter, but as we are knit with the Lord *A. L.* in league of friendship, for the Service of God, so doth charity, and the order of our affaires require that somewhat we should understand of his present estate, etc.

. . . Video & circumpicio, sed non video, Lasky.

Δ. Oh Lord, what is this, what is this! Oh Lord!

. . . Sedem posuit Satanus in cor ejus, & neglexit mandata Dei.

Δ. If *Lasky* fall (upon whom so much of our worldly doings is grounded, as the House-keeping, still in *Cracovia*, ~~there~~ for an year, etc) How shall we supply the wants? etc.

. . . Si ceciderit, statu.

Δ. O Lord, Lord, Lord, have mercy upon us.<sup>3</sup>

The downfall of Laski from his high eminence as the future regenerator of the world; the unapproachableness of Rudolf II, the wariness of King Stephen and the denunciations of the Pope came within an ace of wrecking Dee, Kelley and their families, who were, however, saved and sheltered by Prince Rosenberg in

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 182; June 26, 1584, in Cracow.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 254; October 4, 1584, in Prague.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 375; January 19, 1585, in Prague.

his castle at Trebona in the very nick of time. In view of all these setbacks, the promises and prophecies of the spiritual creatures, whether political, financial or alchemical, must have begun to ring hollow even in the ears of Dee; and one marvels how he could have continued to hitch the wagon of his material existence to such very misleading stars. But amidst the sickening welter of shattered schemes, and dreams not realized, and hopes deferred there remained a solid rock to cling to: the New Law, dictated regularly if intermittently during the sittings, which indeed seemed to be directed chiefly towards that end. It was delivered Kabbalistically by means of numbers and squares which finally yielded up letters and words in an unknown but partly inflected tongue, none other than the speech of Adam before the Fall. The age-old tradition of a sacred magical language was here being used for the compilation of a mystical book, to be called LOGAETH (pronounced LOGAH) or the Speech of God, delivered in the same manner as the Koran was delivered to Mohammed but with the fearful Kabbalistic complexities super-added. Luckily for all concerned, the antediluvian speech was obligingly 'Englished' by the spirits at intervals; but their instructions on how to proceed in the matter of writing the Book were by no means crystal-clear:

*The first leaf (as you call it) is the last of the Book. And as the first leaf is a hotchpot without order; So it signifieth a disorder of the World, and is the speech of that Disorder or Prophetie.*

*Write the Book (after your order) backward, but alter not the form of letters, I speak in respect of the places.*

*Write first in a paper apart.  
Loageth seg lovi brinc  
Larzed dox ner habzillb adnor  
doncha Larb vors hirobra  
exi vr zednip taiip chimvane  
chermach lendix nor zandox.*

*These are only the words of the first leaf.*

*In them is the Divinity of the Trinity.*



*The Mysteries of our Creation.*

*The age of many years.*

*And the conclusion of the World.<sup>1</sup>*

Whilst these words were being pronounced, Kelley declared that a great many monstrous and grisly serpents, dragons and toads appeared, menacing him, but fawning on Galvah who was communicating the verses; this led him to the conclusion that the whole was a work of evil which he wished to break off. One may, I think, reasonably deduce from this, that the dictating of the book was not in his conscious plan, and that once more he was in a state of hallucination. However that may be, this was the shape in which the words and sentences came through:

8 HODNOLSO	12 Kingdoms	Os Lon doh
7 BAIB	are	Biab
6 NEIZA	on whose hands	Azien
5 HLES Moc	a Circle	Com Selh
4 RIZ	I am;	Zir
3 DAIP	your God	Piad
2 OHOG	saith	Goho
1 AMCIM	behold	Mic ma. <sup>2</sup>

'Very pithy, and ponderous, and full of mysteries', Dee remarked of such utterances on a subsequent occasion, a description which could hardly be bettered for such versicles as these:

*The wings of the windes understand your voices of windes. O you the second of the first, whom The burning flames have framed within the depth of my faws, whom I have prepared as Cups for a wedding, or as the flowres in their beauty for the Chamber of righteousness; stronger are your feet then the barren stone, and mightier are your voices then the manifold windes; For you are become a building Such as is not, But in the minde of the all-powerful.<sup>3</sup>*

Δ. What shall I do with the book, after I have bound it?

E.K. I WILL ANSWER FOR HIM... BURN IT.<sup>4</sup>

One's heart goes out to Kelley, and not for the first time either, even if he were only trying to get his own back on the spiritual creatures for attempting to force him to burn *his* magic books.

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. pp. 19f.; June 15, 1583, at Mortlake.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 97f.; April 25, 1584, in Cracow.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 101; April 25, 1584, in Cracow.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 160; May 28, 1584, in Cracow.

He was considerably more tolerant of the series of Calls or Aires, dictated in the same mystic speech, invocations to the angels both of light and darkness, which were gradually taking on the proportions of a book of ritual magic, such as he knew how to work. But here again, the principal instructor, Ave, impatient and peremptory, proved maddeningly obstructive:

AVE. *Now to the Table.*

Δ. Of the Principal King of *Bataiva*, or *Baataiva* (using the last a twice) I doubt of the perfect writing of it.

AVE. *Is it not written? It is all, most easie, and in gathering thou canst not erre. The 24 Seniors are all of one Office: But when thou wilt work in the East, thou must take such as bear rule there; so must thou do of the rest.*

Δ. Do you mean the estate, in respect of any place we shall be in, or in respect of any earthly place, accounted alwayes the East part of the world, wheresoever we be?

AVE. The East and West, in respect of your Poles. *What will you else of me?*

Δ. Whether these four Tables be joyned in their right places, or no.

AVE. *They be.*

Δ. Of the Letters in the Transversary of the wicked their black Crosse, I know no use, as of motivat; nan, etc.

AVE. *Thou shalt know, when thou writest thy book.*

Δ. I desire you of the book to say somewhat more for the fashion, paper, and binding, etc.

AVE. *Thou mayest use thy discretion.*

.....

Δ. As concerning the Offices, vertues, and powers of the three other quarters of the Table, what shall we think of them?

AVE. They are all as the first... Thou hast *three names of God*, out of the line of the holy Ghost, in the principall Crosse of the first Angle, so hast thou three in the second, etc. *Four dayes (after your book is made, that is to say, written) must you onely call upon those names of God, or on the God of Hosts, in those names:*

And 14 dayes after you shall (in this, or in some convenient place) *Call the Angels by Petition, and by the name of God, unto the which they are obedient.*

The 15 day you shall *Cloath your selves*, in vestures made of linnen, white: and so *have the apparition, use and practice of the Creatures.* For, it is not a labour of yeares, nor of many dayes.

E. K. THIS IS SOMEWHAT LIKE THE OLD FASHION OF MAGICK.

AVE. *Nay, they all played at this.*

*You must never use the Garment after, but that once onely, neither the book.*

E. K. TO WHAT END IS THE BOOK MADE THEN, IF IT BE NOT TO BE USED AFTER?

Δ. It is made for to be used that day onely.<sup>1</sup>

Ave, obviously annoyed with Kelley for calling his instructions old-fashioned magic, retorted on him when asked to interpret a vision shown in the stone of a great multitude standing behind sixteen angels, by declaring:

*There shalt thou see thy old Sondenna, and many other wicked ones, that thou hast dealt withall. Hereby shall you judge truly of wicked Magick.*<sup>2</sup>

After Ave had departed in high dudgeon, Kelley confessed to Dee that Sondenna or Sendenna was in truth known to him:

Seeing his name is come to be known (and not by me: for I had received the Sacrament with Mr *Miniver*, of whom I had him, never to bewray or disclose his name) I will tell you somewhat of him. He appeareth in many forms, till at length he appear in a Triangle of fire, and being constrained to the Circle, he taketh form (as it were) of a great Gyant; and will declare before for a month to come which spirits do orderly range: which by name being called, will do their offices, with a few other circumstances, etc. This, indeed, was one, of whom I made most account.<sup>3</sup>

Many questions about the book of invocations were left simmering in Dee's mind after this action; he put them to Ave a few days later:

Δ. Of the letters of the Transversary, I would know your will.

AVE. They are, *as the other*, but for a peculiar practice.

.....  
Δ. As concerning the Etymologies of these names of God, we would be satisfied.

AVE. *God is a Spirit, and is not able to be comprehended.*

Δ. Some Notifying or Declaration, no full comprehension I require.

AVE. *It is no part of mans understanding. They signifie all things, and they signifie nothing....Who can expresse Jehovah what it signifieth....*

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. 184; June 27, 1584, Cracow.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## EXPONENTS OF THE ART

Δ. As for the form of our Petition or Invitation of the good Angels, What sort should it be of?

AVE. *A short and brief speech.*

Δ. We beseech you to give us an example: we would have a confidence, it should be of more effect.

AVE. *I may not do so.*

E. K. AND WHY?

AVE. Invocation proceedeth of the good will of man, *and of the heat and fervency of the spirit: And therefore is prayer of such effect with God.*

Δ. We beseech you, shall we use one form to all?

AVE. *Every one, after a divers form.*

Δ. If the minde do dictate or prompt a divers form, you mean.

AVE. *I know not: for I dwell not in the soul of man.*

.....  
Δ. As concerning the wicked here, Shall I call or summon them all, as I do the good ones in the name of God?

AVE. *No man calleth upon the name of God in the wicked: They are servants and vile slaves.*

Δ. We call upon the name of Jesus in the expulping of devils, saying in the name of Jesus, etc.

AVE. *That In, is against the wicked. No just man calleth upon the name of God, to allure the devil.*

Δ. Then they are not to be named in the first summoning or invitation.

AVE. *At no time to be called.*

E. K. HOW THEN SHALL WE PROCEED WITH THEM?

AVE. *When the Earth lieth opened unto your eyes, and when the Angels of Light, shall offer the passages of the Earth, unto the entrance of your senses (chiefly of seeing) Then shall you see the Treasures of the Earth, as you go: And the caves of the Hills shall not be unknown unto you: Unto these you may say, Arise, be gone, Thou art of destruction and of the places of darkness: These are provided for the use of man. So shalt thou use the wicked, and no otherwise.*

Δ. This is as concerning the natural Mines of the Earth.

AVE. *Not so, for they have nothing to do with the natural Mines of the Earth, but, with that which is corrupted with man.*

Δ. As concerning the coined they have power to bring it.

AVE. So they may: that they keep, and no other.

Δ. How shall we know what they keep, and what they keep not?...

.....  
Δ. I mean of coined money that they keep not; How shall we do to serve our necessities with it?

AVE. *The good Angels are Ministers for that purpose. The Angels of the 4 angles shall make the Earth open to you, and shall serve your necessities from the 4 parts of the Earth.*

.....  
 Δ. These our Questions being thus answered, now I refer the rest to your instructions intended.

AVE. *You have the corn, and you have the ground: Make you but invocations to sow the seed, and the fruit shall be plentiful.*

Δ. As concerning our usage in the 4 dayes in the 14 dayes, we would gladly have some information.

AVE. *You would know how to reape, before your corn be sown.*

Δ. As concerning a fit place and time to call, and other circumstances, we would learn somewhat.

AVE. *You would know where and when to call, before your invocations bear witnessess of your readinesse.*

Δ. Then they must be written in *verbis conceptis*, in formal words.

AVE. *I—a very easie matter.*

Δ. What is the Book you mean that I should write?

AVE. *The Book consisteth (1) of Invocation of the names of God, and (2) of the Angels, by the names of God: Their offices are manifest. You did desire to be fed with spoones, and so you are.<sup>1</sup>*

One cannot help feeling that now was the moment to disinter Kelley's buried books which would surely have been more informative and helpful than Ave's so-called spoon-feeding. For it seems pretty clear that what Dee was after was power over the wicked spirits by means of the angels, in order to wrest treasure from them; and he was sadly chapfallen, when Ave declared that this was unlawful. It belonged indeed to the 'old fashion of magick', rumoured to be extremely potent; the new-fangled sort advocated by Ave would probably merely produce still more numbers of 'ineffectual angels'; and even Dee must have felt by then that no practical difficulties would be solved by them. And indeed, although Kelley and Dee together, or Kelley alone, claimed to have been successful finally (for a period at least) in transmuting base metals into gold, there are no signs in the *True Relation* that they owed this signal feat to the spiritual creatures: on the contrary, the evidence seems to show that they did not.

The world, and notably that part which is too much with us, has always fastened with peculiar avidity on the final act of the long-

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. pp. 187 ff.; July 2, 1584, in Cracow.

drawn-out drama between Kelley, Dee and the spiritual creatures: the increasingly disorderly behaviour of the latter (amongst whom throughout the years reputedly evil spirits had recurrently appeared, objecting to the actions and commanding Dee to burn his 'blasphemous' books); the categorical refusal of the magician to continue with his skrying; the installation of little Arthur Dee in his place, who (poor infant) saw some squares and pricks and letters and men with crowns and even lions, but heard no voices, and was clearly out of his depth; the resumption by Kelley of his abhorred office; the news broken to Dee that the spiritual creatures were now commanding that they should have their wives in common; uproar and unavailing protests from the whole party, including Kelley himself; submission finally to this 'new and strange doctrine', testified to by a Covenant signed by all four.

This descent from the sublime to the ridiculous: from cosmic revelations of a New Law in the speech of Adam to promiscuity between the Kelleys and the Dees is on a par with the resounding invocations in most magical texts for the sake of the most paltry boons. It is but another instance of the profoundly disillusioning nature of an art which has broken many an aspiring spirit and cracked many a not ignoble heart; which does not mean that Kelley's heart was noble, but that John Dee's spirit snapped. Nor am I quite so certain as the worldly wise that it was a mere trick of Kelley's in order to lie with Mrs Dee. A comparison between the language of his own signed statement about the 'new doctrine' and the flood of orgiastic prophecy now let loose suggests that they came from two different levels of consciousness, or two dissociated personalities, the secondary one of which may have been controlled by something else:

...THE WOMEN DISLIKED UTTERLY THIS LAST DOCTRINE, AND ...REQUIRED ANOTHER ACTION FOR BETTER INFORMATION HEREIN...TO THIS THEIR REQUEST OF HAVING AN ACTION, I ABSOLUTELY ANSWER, THAT MY SIMPLICITY BEFORE THE HIGHEST IS SUCH AS I TRUST WILL EXCUSE ME: AND BECAUSE THE SUMME OF THIS DOCTRINE, GIVEN IN HIS NAME, DOTH REQUIRE OBEDIENCE WHICH I HAVE (AS IS BEFORE WRITTEN) OFFERED, I THINK MY SELF DISCHARGED: AND THEREFORE HAVE NO FARTHER CAUSE TO HAZARD MY SELF ANY MORE IN ANY ACTION. WHEREFORE I ANSWER THAT IF IT BE LAWFUL FOR

## RITUAL MAGIC

THEM TO CALL THIS DOCTRINE IN QUESTION, IT IS MORE LAWFUL FOR ME TO DOUBT OF GREATER PERRIL; CONSIDERING THAT TO COME WHERE WE ARE ABSOLUTELY ANSWERED WERE FOLLY, AND MIGHT REDOUND UNTO MY GREAT INCONVENIENCE. THEREFORE BESEECHING GOD TO HAVE MERCY UPON ME, AND TO SATISFIE THEIR PETITIONS, DOUBTS AND VOWS, I FINALLY ANSWER, THAT I WILL FROM THIS DAY FORWARD MEDDLE NO MORE HEREIN.<sup>1</sup>

There, if language means anything at all, spoke a badly frightened man, who was aware of something sinister in the situation which he could not control. And yet he went back to the skrying, and became the mouthpiece of a spirit whose resemblance to the Whore of Babylon needs no pointing out:

*I am the daughter of Fortitude, and ravished every hour, from my youth. For behold, I am Understanding, and Science dwelleth in me; and the heavens oppress me, they covet and desire me with infinite appetite: few or none that are earthly have imbraced me, for I am shadowed with the Circle of the Stone, and covered with the morning Clouds. My feet are swifter than the winds, and my hands are sweeter than the morning dew. My garments are from the beginning, and my dwelling place is in my self. The Lion knoweth not where I walk, neither do the beasts of the field understand me. I am defloured and yet a virgin: I sanctifie, and am not sanctified. Happy is he that imbraceth me: for in the night season I am sweet, and in the day full of pleasure. My company is a harmony of many Cymbals, and my lips sweeter than health it self. I am a harlot for such as ravish me, and a virgin with such as know me not... Purge your streets, O ye sons of men, and wash your houses clean; make your selves holy, and put on righteousness. Cast out your old strumpets, and burn their clothes ...and then I will come and dwell amongst you: and behold, I will bring forth children unto you, and they shall be the Sons of Comfort...*<sup>2</sup>

Turgid, mystical, prophetic, this is the authentic language of inspiration, wherever it may have come from, and however unpleasing the doctrine preached. It has stylistic parallels in the Bible; Nietzsche spoke the same kind of idiom in *Zarathustra*; Crowley, who claims to be a reincarnation of Kelley, took down similar utterances from the spirit Aiwass who dictated the Book of the Law. I cannot believe that the above and kindred revelations

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon, op. cit. p. \*18; April 22, 1587, Trebona.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. \*25; May 23, 1587, Trebona.

given at intervals throughout the actions recorded in the *True Relation* proceeded from the mind of Kelley I, that unregenerate materialist, always badgering the spirits for money and food and clothes and drink. It is much more likely that they came from Kelley II, the secondary, more sinister and more potent personality which the crystal-gazing disengaged.

(b) *The Fairy Folk*

In one of T. R.'s experiments the fairy Sibyllia was summoned to appear before the exorcist by means of two chalk circles and an invocation containing Biblical and other constraints. Some such process must have fallen into the hands of a young man called Thomas Parkes, the son of a blacksmith, towards the close of the seventeenth century. He was of a mathematical turn of mind and well grounded in astronomy; but had abandoned astrology and the casting of horoscopes because they seemed to him to lack mathematical precision. He was therefore an intelligent and educated youth; and he startled his preceptor, a clergyman called Arthur Bedford, very much by asking him one day, whether it was ever permissible to have intercourse with the spirit-world. Bedford solemnly denied that this was lawful in any circumstances; but Parkes maintained that he knew better, and that a perfectly innocent relationship could be established, provided that there was no pact, no frowardness and no evil intent to injure. Pressed to substantiate this opinion, he then owned to the possession of a book which had taught him this precious secret. Following its instructions, he would betake himself at night to cross-roads and there would draw a circle with consecrated chalk mixed with other substances and then invoke the spirits by means of formulae taken in part from Holy Writ. The spirits would thereupon appear in the shape of little maidens about a foot and a half tall, playing outside the circle. At first he had been rather frightened of them, but after a short acquaintance their companionship had become very agreeable to him. Questioned about God, heaven, hell and the hierarchy of spirits, they gave artless but irreproachable answers; and when Thomas asked them to sing, they would retire behind a bush, whence a charming sound would issue, the like of which he had never heard before. Bedford, thoroughly perturbed



and doubting whether Parkes was in the full possession of his faculties, placed an astronomical problem before him, which the young man solved with ease and demonstrated admirably. But in spite of the clergyman's warnings nothing would make him believe that there was anything devilish in the little fairies playing and singing outside the circle of chalk.

About three months later he came to see Bedford in great distress, saying that he wished he had listened to the latter's warnings, for he had become involved in something which he feared might cost him his life and for which he felt great remorse. The acquaintance with the fairies had delighted him so much that he had determined to pursue his studies of the Art and, following the instructions in his book, to procure a familiar spirit. He was only too successful in this, having obtained one called Malach. This name ('my king') had proved ominous for poor Parkes, who had been unhappy and frightened ever since. For from the appearance of Malach onwards the spirits manifested quicker than he wished and in the most horrible shapes. Serpents, lions and bears had replaced the fairy folk; and what was worse, they seemed to blow and breathe upon him, which made his hair rise upon his head. Worst of all, he realized all too soon that it was not in his power to dismiss them, whilst fearing every moment that they would tear him to pieces. A truly hellish visitation of this nature had taken place on a midnight in December, when he had been forced to endure their presence in an icy sweat of terror until at last the dawn had broken and they had vanished. His health was completely shattered by this experience, and though he consulted a doctor, he died shortly afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that Parkes' book contained one or other of the versions of the descending hierarchy of spirits given in the *Lemegeton*, very probably T. R.'s rendering of the *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* printed by Scot. An acquaintance with this would be very liable to generate in a susceptible mind visions of evil spirits in bestial disguise. Moreover Parkes may have remembered the warning given about Astaroth: 'Let every Exorcist take heed, that he admit him not too near him, because of his stinking breath.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This story is taken from *The Spectre, or News of the Invisible World*, London, 1836, pp. 242-8.

<sup>2</sup> Scot, op. cit. p. 233. Cf. above, p. 67.

It is a sobering reflexion that the magic crystal and the fairy folk which enlivened T. R.'s rituals should have led to such dire results when transported from the printed page into the realm of real life, especially considering that both Dee and Thomas Parkes were entirely innocent in intention.

(c) *Apollonius of Tyana in London*

Whether or not a Barrett school of magic was ever established in Cambridge, there is good reason to believe that it had a following in London under the leadership of Bulwer Lytton, and that the French occultist Alphonse Louis Constant (c. 1810-75) was at one time connected with it. It therefore behoves one to scrutinize rather more closely the challenging figure of Eliphas Lévi (Zahed) as he preferred to be called after he had adopted the Hebrew version of his names. Not only is he the great modern exponent of high or transcendental magic as he christened it, being a preaching rather than a practising magician; but he has also left behind him a most important description of an evocation he performed in London in the year 1854. The question as to what manner of man he really was now insists upon an answer.

Lévi was born the son of a poor shoemaker into the Roman Catholic Church; and being an extremely clever child was educated for the priesthood. But, always a wayward and unorthodox thinker, he was expelled from the Petit Séminaire de Paris on account of his heretical views and found his spiritual level in the company of such ambiguous prophets as Vintras. He undertook a mystico-political mission to the poor, and got into trouble by publishing socialistic pamphlets, which earned him a stiff fine and several months' incarceration. Nor did his marriage to a beautiful girl of sixteen called Noémie Cadot anchor him in domestic tranquillity; for she left him after the death of their two young children, married again and became well-known as a sculptress under the name of Claude de Vignon. Lévi's subsequent life was uneventful and yet not exactly conventional. His books on magic failing (rather surprisingly) to keep the wolf from the door, he supplemented his income by giving instruction in occult matters to disciples and admirers. At some point between the publication of *Le dogme et rituel de la haute magie* (1854-6) and *Histoire de*

*la magie* (1860) he reverted to the faith of his fathers and died in 1875 amidst the last offices of the Church.

His reversion had an effect upon his attitude towards magic. In 1856 'high magic' (or what we should call white magic) of a very grandiose brand had been regarded by Lévi as the one science coeval with creation itself, as the key to all miracles and the path to omnipotence; but in 1860 this aspect was reserved, although not with pristine clarity, for the dogma and ritual of the Church. Magic under any other auspices was now condemned as a work of delusion and evil, of hallucination either self-induced or due to diabolic intervention. To the dispassionate reader it makes singularly little difference whether Lévi is expounding magic as a free-thinking magus or as a devout if unorthodox Catholic. In either case the so-called 'science' becomes more transparently bogus with every page one turns. One cannot deny him a highly-wrought imagination, flashes of poetry, moments of great penetration; but his work as a whole amounts to a mere accumulation of brilliant verbiage, pretentious, high-flown, allusive, allegorical and often ambiguous. Read objectively with no ulterior end in view, his books nevertheless contrive, by the author's vitality, vision and verve, to endow the rather tedious subject-matter with a species of literary glamour which has fascinated many minds.

The personality of the writer displays in a marked degree that ambiguity which seems a constant characteristic of real or pretended magicians, and to which the discordant and discrepant accounts of his contemporaries also bear witness. One of his disciples, Madame Gebhard, paid a very handsome tribute to his memory, which reads too much like an obituary notice to be quite convincing:

He lived a quiet and retired life, having few friends....His habits...were simple, but he was no vegetarian....He had a wonderful memory, and a marvellous flow of language, his expressions and illustrations being of the choicest and rarest character....Never did I leave his presence without feeling that my own nature had been uplifted to nobler and better things, and I look upon Eliphas Lévi as one of the truest friends I ever had, for he taught me the highest truth which it is in the power of man or woman to grasp.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic*, p. 10. The omission marks are (presumably) Waite's.

'Simple habits' was evidently a polite way of saying that Lévi was far from clean; and 'no vegetarian' was a euphuism for gluttony, according to Madame Gebhard's private disclosures to Sinnett, who made haste to reveal them to Madame Blavatsky. She for her part had heard from her aunt that Lévi had exorbitantly charged forty francs for one minute of conversation and explanation of the Tarot cards. His hostile biographer, Charles Chauiac, took a very poor view of such lessons, mocking at the credulous clients who paid as much as twenty-five francs for prophecies by Lucifer. Lévi naturally gave an entirely different complexion to the matter:

As regards our lessons—I have no manuscript course—I give to my disciples according to the need of their minds what the spirit gives me for them. I demand nothing, and I refuse nothing from them in return. It is a communion and an exchange of bread; spiritual for bodily. But the needs of the body are of so little account for me that the generous gifts of those of my children who are rich serve mainly to satisfy the first and greatest need of my soul and of all our souls; Charity.<sup>1</sup>

A vision of Chadband unctuous with muffins ogles between these lines; whereas the following passage from the advertisement prefixed to the first edition of the *History of Magic* strikes a more convincing note:

The writer of these books gives lessons willingly to serious and interested persons in search of these; but once and for all he desires to forewarn his readers that he tells no fortunes, does not teach divination, makes no predictions, composes no philtres and lends himself to no sorcery and no evocation. He is a man of science, not a man of deception. He condemns energetically whatsoever is condemned by religion, and hence he must not be confounded with persons who can be approached without hesitation on a question of applying their knowledge to a dangerous or illicit use.<sup>2</sup>

This strenuous disclaimer was written after Lévi's reversion; he might not have protested quite so energetically whilst he was still a free-lance thinker; but in the main he eschewed the practice of magic in favour of the theory. Nevertheless on one occasion prior to 1860 he broke through that golden rule of conduct and gave a

<sup>1</sup> Waite, op. cit. p. 7, footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Lévi, *History of Magic*, tr. Waite, pp. 527f.

detailed account of the performance in *Transcendental Magic*. The magicians whom we have hitherto tried to observe working the magical rituals have not, save the self-confessed swindler Casanova, spoken in the first person except under torture. The nearest to a subjective statement are Dee's reports of Kelley's outbursts and questions to the spirits and the record of Weber's account of the proceedings which led to the death of two of his associates. But now at last the magician himself takes up the burden of the tale. Oddly enough his story rings true. It is written soberly, lucidly and realistically, and seems to be as accurate a statement of facts and as dispassionate a commentary on them as one could possibly expect from anyone deliberately undertaking an experiment in necromancy. At no period of his life, as far as one can make out, was Lévi in favour of raising the spirits of the dead, considering such an operation to be dangerous, destructive to the mind of the exorcist and potentially evil. He believed that communication was established only with the astral bodies of the dead, that is to say with the still sinful and unpurified residuum of the departed soul; and he defined the phantoms seen as 'larvae... dead or perishing substances'. For this reason he was a declared enemy of spiritualism, as indeed occultists generally are. And yet he, of all people, undertook to summon up the shade of Apollonius of Tyana for mantic purposes. According to himself, he yielded to pressure; and it seems likely, reading between the lines of his account, that he consented in order to enhance or maintain his magical prestige with the circle of which Bulwer Lytton was the centre.

Lévi and Lytton were almost certainly acquainted, having met, according to the latter's son, either in Paris or Nice. The mysterious *vril* in *The Coming Race* was only another name for Lévi's Astral Light, the prepotent magical medium which plays such a portentous part in his books. These were all in the Knebworth library which also preserved a letter to Lytton from Lévi on the subject of a universal force and how to employ it for the purpose of evoking spiritual visions and presences; it further made mention of an evocation of elementary spirits performed on the top of the London Pantheon, at which the novelist was present. Madame Blavatsky, much in the know about such matters, declared through the mouth of that spurious Mahatma, Koot Hoomi, that Bulwer

Lytton had in fact attempted to found an occult society for the study of ceremonial magic under his own leadership, and that Eliphas Lévi was one of its members, but that it came to an untimely end. Lévi's presence in London in the spring of 1854 may have been at the invitation of Lytton to become a member of this occult club and help to found a school of magic; but if so the Englishman was probably disappointed, for Lévi evidently fought shy of exhibiting miraculous powers. He complained that the persons of eminence to whom he had introductions were all frivolously anxious for revelations from the supernatural world and expected him to work wonders as if he were a charlatan. Disconcerted (or as he put it discouraged) at being asked to practise what he preached, he represented himself as withdrawing from society and immersing himself in the study of the Kabbala, for which purpose he had originally come to London. He had always shrunk, he said, from the disillusionment and weariness of ceremonial magic, which required in addition an expensive equipment, extremely difficult to collect. He therefore decided to trouble himself no more with English adepts so superficially minded. But they were not so easily shaken off:

...returning one day to my hotel, I found a note awaiting me. This note contained half of a card, divided transversely, on which I recognized at once the seal of Solomon. It was accompanied by a small sheet of paper, on which these words were pencilled:—'To-morrow, at three o'clock, in front of Westminster Abbey, the second half of this card will be given you.' I kept this curious assignation. At the appointed spot I found a carriage drawn up, and as I held unaffectedly the fragment of card in my hand, a footman approached, making a sign as he did so, and then opened the door of the equipage. It contained a lady in black, wearing a thick veil; she motioned to me to take a seat beside her, shewing me at the same time the other half of the card. The door closed, the carriage drove off, and the lady raising her veil I saw that my appointment was with an elderly person, having grey eyebrows and black eyes of unusual brilliance, strangely fixed in expression. 'Sir,' she began, with a strongly marked English accent, 'I am aware that the law of secrecy is rigorous amongst adepts; a friend of Sir B—— L——, who has seen you, knows that you have been asked for phenomena, and that you have refused to gratify such curiosity. You are possibly without the materials; I should like to shew you a complete magical cabinet, but I must exact beforehand the most

inviolable silence. If you will not give me this pledge upon your honour I shall give orders for you to be driven to your hotel.' I made the required promise and keep it faithfully by not divulging the name, position or abode of this lady, whom I soon recognized as an initiate, not exactly of the first order, but still of a most exalted grade. We had a number of long conversations, in the course of which she insisted always upon the necessity of practical experience to complete initiation. She shewed me a collection of magical vestments and instruments, lent me some rare books which I needed; in short, she determined me to attempt at her house the experiment of a complete evocation, for which I prepared during a period of twenty-one days, scrupulously observing the rules laid down in the thirteenth chapter of the *RITUAL*.<sup>1</sup>

Turning to these rules it appears that, in order to converse with a celebrated person now dead, one must meditate on his life and writings for twenty-one days. One must also attempt to form an idea of his personal appearance and hold imaginary conversations with him, carrying his portrait, or failing that his name, continually on one's person. During the whole of this period a vegetarian diet must be observed, and a severe fast during the last seven days. There is also the magical oratory to construct; but Lévi had no need to undertake that labour; it was ready for him:

The cabinet prepared for the evocation was situated in a turret; it contained four concave mirrors and a species of altar having a white marble top, encircled by a chain of magnetized iron. The Sign of the Pentagram... was graven and gilded on the white marble surface; it was inscribed also in various colours upon a new white lambskin stretched beneath the altar. In the middle of the marble table there was a small copper chafing-dish, containing charcoal of alder and laurel wood; another chafing-dish was set before me on a tripod.<sup>2</sup>

One can quite see Lévi's point about the expense and labour involved in assembling the equipment necessary for an evocation of the dead; and one sympathizes with the magician who was 'no vegetarian' (and possibly a glutton) over the rigors of the twenty-one days' abstention from meat and the seven days' fast, which came to an end on July 24. On that day or night Lévi proceeded to call up the ghost of the 'divine Apollonius' in order to put two

<sup>1</sup> Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, tr. Waite, pp. 152 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 153.

secret questions to him, one concerning himself and one on behalf of the lady. She had wished to be present at the operation; but the indispensable third person proving too nervous, Lévi conducted the experiment alone. If he followed his own instructions, he must have bathed before entering the oratory and all his undergarments must have been 'of the most intact and scrupulous cleanliness'. ('All dirt is evidence of negligence, and negligence is deadly in Magic.') As for the upper garments, they were of the kind enjoined by the ritual texts:

I was clothed in a white garment, very similar to the alb of our catholic priests, but longer and wider, and I wore upon my head a crown of vervain leaves, intertwined with a golden chain. I held a new sword in one hand, and in the other the Ritual. I kindled two fires with the requisite prepared substances, and began reading the evocations of the Ritual in a voice at first low, but rising by degrees.<sup>1</sup>

The ritual chosen by Lévi for this purpose was the *Magic Philosophy* of Patricius, containing, he said, the doctrine of Zoroaster and the writings of Hermes Trismegistus. He also recited in a loud voice in Greek the so-called *Nuctemeron* of Apollonius, of which he gave a translation at the end of *Transcendental Magic*, adding a commentary which merely makes confusion worse confounded for those who are outside the magic esoteric circle. Lévi said that *Nuctemeron* might be translated *The Light of Occultism*, and indeed that rendering seems fitting enough:

#### *The First Hour*

In unity, the demons chant the praises of God; they lose their malice and fury.

#### *The Second Hour*

By the duad, the Zodiacal fish chant the praises of God; the fiery serpents entwine about the caduceus, and the thunder becomes harmonious.

#### *The Third Hour*

The serpents of the Hermetic caduceus entwine three times; Cerberus opens his triple jaw, and fire chants the praises of God with the three tongues of the lightning.

<sup>1</sup> Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 153f.



## RITUAL MAGIC

### *The Fourth Hour*

At the fourth hour the soul revisits the tombs; the magical lamps are lighted at the four corners of the circle: it is the time of enchantments and illusions.

### *The Fifth Hour*

The voice of the great waters celebrates the God of the heavenly spheres.

### *The Sixth Hour*

The spirit abides immovable; it beholds the infernal monsters swarm down upon it, and does not fear.

### *The Seventh Hour*

A fire, which imparts life to all animated beings, is directed by the will of pure men. The initiate stretches forth his hand, and pains are assuaged.

### *The Eighth Hour*

The stars utter speech to one another; the soul of the suns corresponds with the exhalation of the flowers; chains of harmony create unison between all natural things.

### *The Ninth Hour*

The number which must not be divulged.

### *The Tenth Hour*

The key of the astronomical cycle and of the circular movement of human life.

### *The Eleventh Hour*

The wings of the genii move with a mysterious and deep murmur; they fly from sphere to sphere, and bear the messages of God from world to world.

### *The Twelfth Hour*

The works of the light eternal are fulfilled by fire.<sup>1</sup>

After intoning this solemn nonsense, Lévi followed it up with a conjuration in Greek, beginning:

Let the Father of all be Counsellor and thrice-great Hermes guide, and ending:

O Apollonius, O Apollonius, O Apollonius, thou teachest the Magic of Zoroaster [follower] of Ormuzd: and this is the service of the gods.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 500f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 361.

The smoke spread, the flame caused the objects upon which it fell to waver, then it went out, the smoke still floating white and slow about the marble altar; I seemed to feel a quaking of the earth, my ears tingled, my heart beat quickly. I heaped more twigs and perfumes on the chafing-dishes, and as the flame again burst up, I beheld distinctly, before the altar, the figure of a man of more than normal size, which dissolved and vanished away. I recommenced the evocations and placed myself within a circle which I had drawn previously between the tripod and the altar. Thereupon the mirror which was behind the altar seemed to brighten in its depth, a wan form was outlined therein, which increased and seemed to approach by degrees. Three times, and with closed eyes, I invoked Apollonius. When I again looked forth there was a man in front of me, wrapped from head to foot in a species of shroud, which seemed more grey than white. He was lean, melancholy and beardless, and did not altogether correspond to my preconceived notion of Apollonius. I experienced an abnormally cold sensation, and when I endeavoured to question the phantom I could not articulate a syllable. I therefore placed my hand upon the Sign of the Pentagram, and pointed the sword at the figure, commanding it mentally to obey and not alarm me, in virtue of the said sign. The form thereupon became vague, and suddenly disappeared. I directed it to return, and presently felt, as it were, a breath close by me; something touched my hand which was holding the sword, and the arm became immediately benumbed as far as the elbow. I divined that the sword displeased the spirit, and I therefore placed its point downwards, close by me, within the circle. The human figure reappeared immediately, but I experienced such an intense weakness in all my limbs, and a swooning sensation came so quickly over me, that I made two steps to sit down, whereupon I fell into a profound lethargy, accompanied by dreams, of which I had only a confused recollection when I came again to myself. For several subsequent days my arm remained benumbed and painful. The apparition did not speak to me, but it seemed that the questions I had designed to ask answered themselves in my mind. To that of the lady an interior voice replied—Death!—it was concerning a man about whom she desired information. As for myself, I sought to know whether reconciliation and forgiveness were possible between two persons who occupied my thoughts, and the same inexorable echo within me answered—Dead!... The consequence of this experience on myself must be called inexplicable. I was no longer the same man; something of another world has passed into me; I was no longer either sad or cheerful, but I felt a singular attraction towards death, unaccompanied, however, by any suicidal tendency.... I repeated the

same experiment on two further occasions...the net result of these two additional evocations was for me the revelation of two kabalistic secrets which might change, in a short space of time, the foundations and laws of society at large, if they came to be known generally.

Am I to conclude from all this that I really evoked, saw and touched the great Apollonius of Tyana? I am not so hallucinated to affirm or so unserious as to believe it. The effect of the preparations, the perfumes, the mirrors, the pantacles, is an actual drunkenness of the imagination, which must act powerfully upon a person otherwise nervous and impressionable. I do not explain the physical laws by which I saw and touched; I affirm solely that I did see and that I did touch, apart from dreaming, and this is sufficient to establish the real efficacy of magical ceremonies. For the rest, I regard the practice as destructive and dangerous; if it became habitual, neither moral nor physical health would be able to withstand it...After the evocation I have described, I re-read carefully the life of Apollonius, who is represented by historians as an ideal of antique beauty and elegance, and I remarked that towards the end of his life he was starved and tortured in prison. This circumstance, which remained perhaps in my memory without my being aware of it, may have determined the unattractive form of my vision, the latter regarded solely as the voluntary dream of a waking man.<sup>1</sup>

It ought to have been an outstanding event in the annals of ceremonial magic, this evocation of one of the greatest magicians of antiquity by one of the most famous of the modern magi, and moreover by means of a ritual attributed to the phantom. It seems, however, to have had no proportionate effect, since Lévi evidently did not divulge those two world-shaking Kabbalistic secrets. Those who have undergone similar intellectual enlightenment when coming round from gas will probably realize why he refrained from the attempt, without for that reason impugning his veracity as a recorder of events. As far as in him lay he was reporting his experiences accurately and conscientiously. That swooning sensation followed by a profound lethargy recalls the stupor which overwhelmed Weber during his invocation with such disastrous results: Charcoal fumes are more deadly than wood-smoke and incense, the materialists will say; the occultists will retort that to invoke spirits for ignoble ends is more dangerous to the operator than to summon up the shade of a lofty intelligence

<sup>1</sup> Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 154-7.

for purposes of legitimate questioning. But the most interesting feature of the account is the uncertainty of the commentary. Lévi kept on shifting his ground between rationalism and mysticism. Like Casanova he seemed to wish to have it both ways: to display his scepticism and objectivity and yet to convince the reader of the reality of the experience. From the subjective point of view it seems to have been real enough; whatever interpretation is put upon the events described, they would appear to have occurred in Lévi's mind exactly as he recounted them.

But only in Lévi's mind. The faint feeling of reality clinging to his account evaporates in the transcription made by Somerset Maugham in *The Magician*. The nineteenth-century phantom glides away noiselessly, leaving no trace; whereas the ghost of young Enkidu, summoned up thousands of years ago, still lingers above ground, sorrowing with Gilgamish, his faithful and inconsolable friend. Such is the magic of poetry.



## CONCLUSION

### THE MYTH OF SATANISM

In my previous study, *The Myth of the Magus*, whilst attempting to place the sixteenth-century legend of Faust in its historical setting, I came to the conclusion that, like countless other versions of the magus-myth, it had its roots in ritual. It also however appeared to have created ritual, judging by the many and various *Harrowings of Hell* which bore the name of Faust. On closer scrutiny this proved to be more than doubtful; and the place of the Faustian magical texts in the development of the Art as a whole had therefore to be determined. This raised the fundamental question as to how far medieval and modern magical ceremonies had produced or inspired mythology and art as they are known to have done in antiquity. On the face of it nothing comparable to Greek mythological tragedy or to the medieval passion plays has been generated by magical rites in modern times; and yet the bewildering phenomenon of the Faustus-myth, a whole complex of legend, poetry, drama and art, challenged this assumption and seemed to hint at some conclusion only partially foreseen when I embarked on the investigation, but which became clearer and more irresistible during the course of the enquiry.

Before coming to the crux of the matter, it is necessary to recapitulate and illustrate the inferences which have been tentatively drawn here and there throughout the book. If this study has done nothing else, it has certainly shown that ritual tends towards art in all but the most debased and crassly utilitarian of the texts. In the records of antiquity the result and not the origin meets the gaze; but the relationship of cause and effect seems undeniable. The necromantic scene in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* undoubtedly gives the impression of being based on ritual ceremonies (notably burial rites) witnessed by the poet, and so does the raising of Darius in *The Persians*; whereas Homer's description seems rather to have been inspired by legend or hearsay. The love-charms in Virgil's *Pharmaceutria* were deliberately chosen for their poetical quality, and Lucan's hair-raising account

of the rites of Erichtho illustrates the propensity of ritual to produce fiction, consummated in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*. A less conscious and more organic development can be traced in the influence of the *katabasis* on the descent of Aeneas into the Underworld in the wake of many an actor-hero in kingship and fertility-rites; and Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a great poet's vision and interpretation of the journey through the nether and upper regions constantly undertaken by magicians in legend because they had done so in the rites. These two examples show the creative energy in ceremonial magic transformed into peerless poetry; but the question still remains as to whether any comparable process has occurred in more recent times.

Shakespeare's Ariel and Milton's Azael derive from magical texts and it is just possible that the demonologies which were such a marked feature of these manuals from *The Testament of Solomon* downwards contributed the notion of a pandemonium to Milton, who crystallized the floating conceptions generated by the rituals into a superb pageantry of evil. But this is speculation and does not admit of proof. One is on firmer ground with the Greek magical papyri which show spontaneous development into poetry in many of the texts, a process also visible in some of Anti-Scot's rituals, in which magic for magic's sake lords it over practical considerations, and poetry is achieved. This however is in the framework of the ceremony itself, as are also the epic elements discernible in *The Testament of Solomon*, which elaborated the legend of the building of the Temple and contributed some items to it, verging on the territory of folk-lore. The introductions to the *Key of Solomon* also used and added something to the mythical matter about the wise king, and the first part of the *Lemegeton* could be described as an amplification and elaboration of the legend of the brazen vessel. 'Faust's' *Magia* has epic streaks in it too; the planetary spirits as well as the presumed author and Mephisto give autobiographical details, which are also present in the *Black Raven*; whilst the pygmies in *Magia* and Luridan in Anti-Scot show affiliations with folk-lore. In all these cases the rituals owe far more to legend than they add to it, and are hardly more than signs and tokens of a persistent magical tradition associated with certain well-known names.

Rather less hidebound is *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage as delivered by Abraham the Jew unto his son*

*Lamech* A.D. 1458. This mid-fifteenth-century text, originally written in Hebrew and translated from French into English by Mathers, has a long autobiographical introduction describing how the writer became possessed of the secrets communicated in the manuscript. Having received instruction in the Kabbala from his father Simon, Abraham set out at the age of twenty when Simon died upon a voyage of discovery into the mysteries of the Lord. He went first to Mayence, where for ten years he sat at the feet of a Jew called Moses, only to come to the conclusion that his arts were infidel and idolatrous, whether deriving from Egyptian, Median, Persian, Arabian or Christian sources. On February 13, 1397 he therefore embarked for Egypt and spent two years in Constantinople, learning the sacred wisdom of Abramelin and copying out his secret books. On the way home he visited the magicians in all the cities he passed through and was disillusioned or disgusted with nearly all, notably with the wizard whom he found in Prague

...a wicked man named Antony, who in truth showed me wonderful and supernatural things, but the infamous wretch avowed to me, that he had made a pact with the demon, and had given himself over to him in body and in soul, while the deceitful Leviathan had promised him forty years of life to do his pleasure. Unto this day they do sing in the streets of the terrible end which befel him, for his body was found dragged through the streets and his head without any tongue therein, lying in a drain.<sup>1</sup>

Traditional beliefs about the terrible doom of black magicians have here been drawn into the autobiographical framework of the handbook, which was obviously designed to procure credence for the secrets and a market for the wares after the fashion of magical texts. Nevertheless in this instance, and sometimes in others too, story-telling for its own sake won a temporary if precarious victory over utilitarian aims; so that this introduction forms a halfway-house between ritual proper and a novel about magic. A further step forwards, although one that can hardly be called an aesthetic progress, is to be found in the German Wagnerbook of 1593. This self-styled sequel to the *Faustbook* is one of the many

<sup>1</sup> C. J. S. Thompson, *The Mysteries and Secrets of Magic*, London, 1927, pp. 221 f. I have not been able to see this text myself and am taking the details from Thompson.



dead-sea fruits of legend, being a most uninspired imitation of the original (shorn of all its potential greatness and of its tragic emotion) but doggedly determined to go one better than its model as far as sensationalism was concerned. In pursuance of that end no less than twenty-five chief devils visit Wagner in state, whereas Faust had received only eight (BELIAL, LUCIFER, BEELZEUB, ASTEROTH, SATANAS, ANUBIS, DYTHICANUS and DRACHUS). The author of the Wagnerbook who was well up in contemporary magical handbooks and used them liberally took his twenty-five fiends bodily from Wierus' *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, using the descriptions he found there, although condensing them somewhat. Diminished as to numbers but otherwise unchanged, this unattractive crew now lumbered into a work of fiction, and though they do not exactly adorn it, one feels that they have chosen an appropriate *milieu* for their ungainly gyrations. Nevertheless they knew an hour of greater glory in the Faustian *Sea-Spirit* and in the chivalrous rite of Anti-Scot. They also exercised the imagination of the English author who produced an independent Wagnerbook in 1594 called *The Second Report of Doctor John Faustus*. This is as unlike its German counterpart as chalk is different from cheese, being a work of pure imagination bordering throughout on pure nonsense, with flashes of wit, poetry and fancy, metaphysical arguments, chivalrous combats and a good deal of irresponsible skylarking. The author knew Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* and drew on T.R.'s translation of the *Pseudomonarchia* for an infernal manifestation which occurred whilst Wagner was musing on the possibility of summoning up the departed spirit of his sometime master Faust:

Sodainly the air began to receive an alteration and change with a thick foggy mist, as if it would have shut up the desired day from man's view, the winds raged, the thunder lifted up his voyce above the common strain, hail and rain immediately following, and all these but the ordinary presages of an appearing spirit. . . . Sodainly (for alwayes such haps are sodain) the doors flew open as if they would have fled from flying, and in all pomp entered as it were the prologue of a comedy, a fellow so short and little, as if he should be of one year, and yet not so briefe as ill favoured, in his hands a club, on his head a crown of laurel, riding upon a low mule, his name was Gomory, a strong and mighty duke, the ruler of six and twenty legions, and next in bravery appeared

## THE MYTH OF SATANISM

Volac a great governour, in the shape like a boy with wings like an Angel of Hell seeming to be of old rusty iron, riding upon a dragon with four heads, in his hands he held a flaming torch to give light to the after commers and beholders; next after him appeared Asmody a king mighty and puissaunt, ragged and bristled like a bore on foot, bearing a banner or lance. After him issued Lucifer the king of the Orient, with the four monarchs of his dominions, betwixt them were two mighty spaniels which drew in a fiery cart, Doctor John Faustus...<sup>1</sup>

Three of the fiends in the *Pseudomonarchia*, of which only Volac at all resembles 'Solomon's' portrait, amble past in this vision, rather more nimbly than in the Wagnerbook, though less dramatically than in *Sea-Spirit* and far less impressively than in Anti-Scot's invocation of Paymon, Bathin and Parma. But the author had not yet done with the *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. He based his exuberant description of the 'lamentable history of the death of sundry Students of Wittenberg' on the invocation of the five infernal kings of the North, given in Scot's fifteenth book. What is more he did the thing in style. Hearing that Wagner had left Wittenberg, seven reckless scholars determined to use the books he had left behind in order to do some conjuring on their own account:

And then down they get into a black court, and having lighted tapers, having injuriously framed all the circles, squares, triangles, &c. and apparelled with all the conjuring robes that the art requireth, there they begin in a most dreadful confusion of hellish sillables to enform the fiend, and after these words followed (as there needs must such things follow after such words) a terrible roar, and then so bright a smothering thick fiery fume ascended out of the earth as if it would have made an eternal night, then a vehement flame followed, which with continual motion ran about the brims of the circle, until as weary it left moving...then from beneath was heard most lamentable outcries, from above huge trembling, thunder, and round about nothing but fear and death in a thousand terrible divers shapes...then round about was sounded alarms with drums, and onset with trumpets, as if there all the world had conflicted, then the flame which all this while ran about the circle became a body, but such a body, as if it had been but a picture would have madded any one. At whose sight they wholly overcome with deadly fear forgot the use of the pantacles or any such gear, but even submitted themselves to the small mercy

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Thoms, *Early English Prose Romances*, London, 1858, III, pp. 319f.

of the fiend, who with great violence, rent them, and tore them most lamentably.

After a fearful, although illusory, conflagration, friends broke in to try to save the conjurers, and found

... a round plot of some one hundred feet any way from the centre, there found they the religious circles, there the strange characters, names of angels, a thousand crosses, there found they the five crosshilted daggers for the five kings of hell, there many a strong bulwark builded with rows of crosses, there found they the surplesses, the stoles, pall, mitres, holy water pots broken, their periapts, seals, signs of the angels of the seven dayes, with infinite like trash and damnable roguery the fruits of the Devils rank fansie. But the most lamentable sight of all, the seven scholars utterly torn in pieces, their blood having changed the colour of the ground into a dark crimson, all their bodies as black as any coal, as if they had been scorcht with a material fire, their flesh violently torn from their bones...<sup>1</sup>

This riotous, lurid and finally ghastly description was inspired by the passages in the *Faustbook* which deal with the manifestations that occurred during the conjuring scene and with the frightful death of the hero at the end of the book. But, as a glance at the diagram over-leaf will prove, Scot's *Discouerie* was responsible for the details of the *mise-en-scène*, given with a gusto and verve which show that they had greatly appealed to the anonymous author's imagination. Imagination of a rather crackbrained sort was indeed his long suit; and the necromantic process printed by Scot which ended with the procuring of the ring of invisibility by the three sisters of fairies, Milia, Achilia and Sibylia, produced a fantasy whose source of inspiration was obviously that very rite.

During a spirited and dramatic account of a kind of mystery-play, the tragedy of Faustus, performed in the air by spirits before an assembled throng of gaping Wittenbergers, the author interpolated an episode of considerable length from pure exuberance and high spirits. A young lady, he tells us, arriving by chance upon the scene, looked up into the fearful flaming eyes of the devil and fell down in a swoon

... whom they conveyed away very speedily, yet ere they could come home she was well nigh dead, and so she lay for two years without hope

<sup>1</sup> Thoms, op. cit. III, pp. 370ff. Cf. above, p. 236.

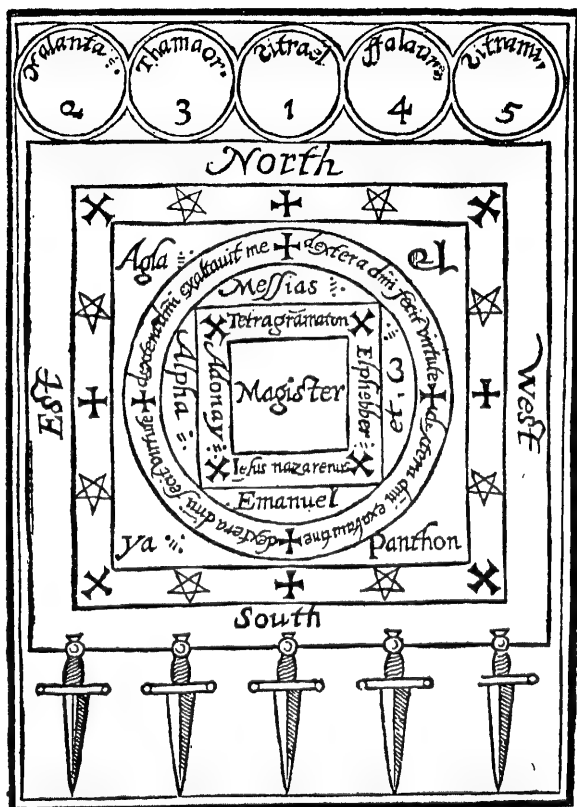


Figure for summoning the five Kings of the North

of life, or certainty of death: great sorrow to her parents and as cruel pain to her: but she at length recovered her spirit, and if by your patience I may, I will tell you how. There was a most learned and excellent doctor dwelling in the town who had great knowledge in the black-art, who being requested to use some physick to aid her in her great extremity, being promised for reward five thousand dollars;

this doctor perceiving the cause of her malady was not caused of any distemperature of her body, but only of the aforesaid fear, knew that physick might well make her body sound, but her mind never. Wherefore not only for the reward but also to become gracious and famous at once, proceeded in his cure on this manner. One night having made his orisons and nine times combed his hair with tears of a pure maid, and nine times gone about a fire made all of pure Heben coal, and thrice nine times called upon the name of the most dreadful Hecate, he laid himself to sleep upon a pure white and clean unspotted maidens smock, and covered himself over with the ashes of a white hind roasted and burned altogether: he slept, and the next morning apparelled in white robes having often and often called, recalled and exorcized the three fairies Millia, Achilya, and Sybilla, at length the ground opened, and with them they brought a milk white steed, and did put upon his finger the ring of invisibility; when they were vanished, he mounted upon his horse, who with more swift flight than the winged Pegasus carried him throughout the wide air so fast and so long, that having passed over Bohem, Hungary, Thracia, all Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and at length to Arabia Faelix, where he alighted upon a most high mountain... there he tyed his horse to a tree, and knocked at the castle gate, where afore was never seen any, so that no path could there be seen, so that a man might justly have called it the house of little hospitality; to him there came Neglectment, an old lady, and demanded what he would, who told her his errand, and withal a ring of fine gold from the three fairies, she knew the ring and his errand, and conveyed him into fair rooms wherein she shewed him many a worthy knightes memorials, many an antick monument heaped up; but inner rooms so monstrous dark and nightly, that no humane eye could perceive anything, and forth she brought him into a garden, out of the midst whereof rose a little hill, from the summity whereof, there was a paved way of pure crystal stone from along whose bosom trilled a small water; this water an old man held, and indeed he had it as a patrimony, for therefore he could shew many an ancient evidence and worn charter, his hair was all fled to the front, as if some enemy had scared the hinder locks from his scalp, on his back hung a pair of wings which flagged down, as if either they had been broken or he weary, and thus he over-strode a round world, from out of every part whereof gushed out this small river which was conveyed down in this cristal pipe: in one hand he held a long sythe, and in the other an hour-glass: here the Doctor seeing the old ruines of this sumptuous house, and all the fair walls and buildings overgrown with a deadly moss was much amazed, but because he could not tarry, he dipt a small vial in the spring and

departed... Neglectment shut the doors upon him, whilst he mounted upon his white swift-footed horse, and by the like time arrived at his own house, where having with the blood of a new slain heyfer thrice anointed the feet of his Cavallo, and tying at his ear with a string of fine silk, spun by the hands of a pure maid, the received ring of invisibility unto his ear, with many a cross and many an open Ave Maria, dismissed him, who in the same moment returned to the place from whence he came. With this water the doctor came to the maid, and having used a certain incantation, gave her to drink of the water of deep oblivion, which she had no sooner tasted of, but straightways she had forgotten the terrible picture of the devil, and was revived of all her infernal fears, the doctor called, winning him credit, favour and fame and richly rewarded for his medecine, departed, and coming home threw his vial into the deep river burying oblivion with oblivion...<sup>1</sup>

The whole fantastic episode centres upon the reanimation of a corpse, and the swooning young lady owes her being to the necromantic process in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, in which a dead body which had to be brought to life also paved the way for the evocation of Milia, Achilia and Sibylia and the production of a ring of invisibility. Thereafter the author of *The Second Report of Doctor John Faustus* went curvetting and cavorting off on his magic steed into realms of poetical allegory strongly reminiscent of the *Fairy Queen*; and as far as one can make out he was poking fun in his happy-go-lucky way both at the necromantic process and at Spenser's poem. But whether in jest or in earnest, he released a romantic story from the ritual text; it came gambolling out spontaneously and naturally to execute its capers, then made its bow to the onlookers and airily retired. It had done something to show the creative energy latent in ceremonial magic, but perhaps not very much. And indeed it must be allowed that the data collected up to now to illustrate the emergence of poetry or narrative from medieval and modern ritual texts are not very impressive, considered as a whole.

The structure of invocation-ceremonies being dramatic, and Greek as well as medieval drama bearing the traces of their ritual origin plain to see, one naturally expects something more remarkable to have been achieved along dramatic lines by the texts I have been investigating. Drama is obviously if only embryonically

<sup>1</sup> Thoms, op. cit. III, pp. 357 ff.

present in the dialogues held between 'Solomon' and the demons in the *Testament*; it rises to the proportion of dramatic action in the full-length ceremonial in the *Clavicles*; it assumes the character of a personal conflict between the Karcist and Lucifuge in the *Grand Grimoire*, and blossoms out into melodrama in *Sea-Spirit*. Passing from one to another of these texts, one has the impression of witnessing the birth-throes of drama, only to come to the conclusion that the infant was still-born; for however dramatic in essence neither the Solomonic nor the Faustian nor the English rituals have developed into drama.

The epithet Faustian naturally gives one pause; for, although it became clear when examining the texts that they were Faustian in name only and were older than the legend, might they not nevertheless have played some part in producing it? A possible clue seems to suggest itself here; but will it really help to explain the extraordinary vitality of the sixteenth-century Faust-myth which went hurtling through folk-lore, literature, music and art, touching the lowest and reaching the highest levels almost simultaneously? Suddenly it was there: in chapbooks broadcast throughout Europe, in an immortal Elizabethan tragedy; hawked as a ballad round the streets; pictured on hostelry walls; gaped at on the boards, in plays which were spectacular and sensational, grisly and sentimental, farcical and fearful turn by turn; pirouetting in ballets, posturing in pantomimes, prancing round circus-rings; stilled in the art of Rembrandt, flagellated by Hogarth, strutting in puppet-booths; battling through the period of Enlightenment; breasting the breakers of the Storm and Stress; suffering a Goethean sea-change, but with its vitality unimpaired.

One thing at least seems certain: this miracle of creative energy cannot conceivably have been due to the dim and distant kingship and fertility rites from which the legend of Faustus ultimately drew its being; for, though a descendant of the mighty magus of old, the sixteenth-century magician was a degenerate scion of a house which had once been illustrious but had now fallen into decay and disrepute; and ceremonies enacted thousands of years ago, whose very memory was lost, could never have inoculated this vigour into his veins. And yet in the person of Faustus the legend underwent a rebirth, almost as if a sickly and puling infant of an emasculate race had been revitalized at some baptismal font, a secret font,

whose waters were dark, sinister and potent. It may seem strange and at first sight preposterous to hazard the opinion that rituals of invocation similar to those later attributed to Faust were the source whence the waters were drawn, but such I believe to have been the case.

The first Faustbook is not very helpful on this subject, either because the author was more or less in the dark, or for the reason given by the editor, who stated that he would not repeat the conjurations used by the hero of the book when invoking the spirits, lest he should lead his readers into temptation. He kept this promise, and gave a very sketchy account of the ceremony of conjuration which did not go beyond matters of common knowledge. Taking certain magical words, figures, characters and conjurations with him, Faust went one evening into the Spessart wood outside Wittenberg, and there at a place where four roads met he made several concentric circles with a staff and proceeded to invoke the devil between the hours of nine and ten. Nothing could well have been less informative as far as would-be wizards were concerned; nevertheless this bald statement enshrines the current traditional notions gathered directly or indirectly from ritual manuscripts. The sensational and terrifying manifestations which were then described and which I have quoted above<sup>1</sup> may have been included as a deterrent, but were more probably put in for their sales-value; in either case they were based on common rumour which for its part probably arose from the warnings in most ritual texts about the manifestations to be expected when invoking fiends. The first Faustbook by spreading itself on this subject added its quota, as Cellini also did, to what might be called the myth of manifestations; both the German and English Wagner-books developed and heightened the theme; passing into print this legend which issued from ritual was elaborated if not enriched.

Marlowe was not interested in this aspect of the situation when he came to dramatize it. On the other hand he was not, and indeed could not be, content with the brief and paltry rendering of the conjuration-ceremony which he found in his source. On the whole almost disconcertingly faithful to the Faustbook as 'Englished' by P. F., he drew on his own knowledge of infernal evocations when it came to the summoning up of Mephistopheles,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 166.



and being the great tragic poet he was he threw a dark shadow over the performance. It is the shadow of Satanism, so persistently absent from the texts of black magic as has been abundantly illustrated in these pages, where it has been shown that (with the single exception of the preamble to *Wittenberg*) the devils summoned were evilly intreated and often even tortured in effigy but never worshipped. The desperately wicked nature of the undertaking as stressed by the *Faustbook* and intensified by Marlowe suggested a different approach:

Now that the gloomy shadow of the night,  
 Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,  
 Leaps from th' antarctic world unto the sky,  
 And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,  
 Faustus, begin thine incantations,  
 And try if devils will obey thy hest,  
 Seeing thou hast pray'd and sacrific'd to them.  
 Within this circle is Jehovah's name,  
 Forward and backward anagrammatiz'd;  
 Th' abbreviated names of holy saints,  
 Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,  
 And characters of signs and erring stars,  
 By which the spirits are enforc'd to rise;  
 Then fear not, Faustus, to be resolute,  
 And try the utmost magic can perform. [Thunder.<sup>1</sup>

Involuntarily one remembers that Gilles was also said (as I believe libellously) to have adored and sacrificed to the demons; there was less justification in his case for such a statement, in view of his determination never to surrender his soul to Satan. Marlowe's Faustus, and indeed his German predecessor, were not the men to recoil before that deed; but it seems fairly clear that the Elizabethan dramatist, strongly suspected of magical practices, had no Satanist text to guide him in this scene, to judge by the actual invocation:

*Sint mihi Dii Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex Jehovae!  
 Ignis, aeris, aquae, terrae spiritus, salvete! Orientis princeps, Belzebub,  
 inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus vos, ut appareat et  
 surgat Mephistophilis. [Enter Dragon from above.] Quid tu moraris?*

<sup>1</sup> C. Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, ed. Boas, London, 1932, pp. 68f.

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*per Jehovah, Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis!*

*Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS.*

I charge thee to return, and change thy shape;  
Thou art too ugly to attend on me. . . .<sup>1</sup>

*Numen* is, I think, a misreading for *nomen*, and the 'triple name' could stand for ADONAY, ZEBOATH, JEHOVAH or for JEHOVAH, EMMANUEL, ZAMEH (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) or any other of the many variant holy names by which the deity was invoked in black magic. With this exception, the invocation, although there is a learned Renaissance flavour about it, follows orthodox lines, and the word *valeat* instead of *salveat* represents Marlowe's possibly not very convincing but rather subtle attempt to make the invocation blasphemous. It certainly is at odds with 'Jehovah's name forward and backward anagrammatiz'd' (a pithy poetical way of describing the method used by the Kabbalists to determine the seventy-two holy names for God), and also with the abbreviated names of the saints in the circle. It makes nonsense too of the conclusion: 'By Jehovah, hell and the holy water which I now sprinkle, and the sign of the Cross, which I now make.' It would be worse than useless, it would be in the highest degree dangerous, to call on the name of the 'triple deity' who had just been dismissed (however courteously) from the circle. Yet *valeat* is not a misreading or a slip for *salveat*, as Faustus' subsequent declaration makes clear:

*Meph.* For, when we hear one rack the name of God,  
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,  
We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul;  
Nor will we come, unless he use such means  
Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd.  
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring  
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,  
And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.

*Faust.* So Faustus hath  
Already done; and holds this principle,  
There is no chief but only Belzebub;  
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marlowe, *op. cit.* pp. 69 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

Marlowe's legitimate desire to emphasize the Satanism of the Faust legend led in the conjuration to the manufacture of bricks without straw; one can only deduce that no really blasphemous text was available to the supposed member of the so-called 'School of Night':

Of Sir Walter Rawleys school of Atheisme by the waye, & of the Conjuror that is M[aster] thereof, and of the diligence vsed to get yong gentlemen of this schoole, where in both Moyses and our Saio<sup>r</sup>, the olde, and the new Testamente are iested at, and the schollars taughte, amonge other thinges, to spell God backward.<sup>1</sup>

It seems unlikely that 'forward and backward anagrammatiz'd' derived from Harriot's instructions to his 'schollars'; whereas '*quid tu moraris?*' is an obvious echo of the '*non morare, non morare, non morare*' in many of the 'orthodox' rituals of black magic; and the charge to the spirit to change his shape, the first manifestation having been too repulsive, is a recurrent feature of these texts. They proved rather intractable material for Satanist reconditioning at Marlowe's hands.

The legend however seemed to demand it; and since all the subsequent actions in the drama (as in the Faustbooks) were a result of the invocation, the relationship between the ritual and the legend can now be recognized more clearly. Reverting to the simile of baptism, it seems fairly accurate to say that the tracing of the ceremonial circle on the hero's forehead dedicated him to the doom which lay in wait for magicians under the Christian dispensation. Within that ritually speaking impregnable fortress the myth-makers saw a trap, and the bait was the pact with Infernus. This brings us to the very heart of the problem. For a scrutiny of the magical texts shows that the original wording of the pact was based on the ritual evocations. Condensed and summarized, and insisting on the personal and spiritual immunity of the magician, the unilateral pact or oath developed spontaneously from the conjurations, and was sworn to or signed by the fiends when the proper state of fear and trembling had been induced

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Boas, *Christopher Marlowe*, Oxford, 1940, p. 113. English summary of Robert Parsons, *Responsio ad Elizabethae edictum*, 1592. Quiller-Couch, Dover Wilson, Yates and Bradbrook all agree in identifying 'The School of Night' in *Love's Labour's Lost* with Raleigh's 'School of Atheism'; but it is not certain that Marlowe was a member.

in them by the ceremony of invocation. This process was described by 'Agrippa'; and the Book containing the pacts or oaths is mentioned in the *Clavicula* as well as by 'Honorius', and given in full by 'Faust' in *Magia*. The text of the oath is also to be found in that manual; and both the German 'Honorius' and *The Black Raven* give a detailed unilateral pact. Thus far ceremonial magic could go in the direction of drama whilst retaining its essential hypothesis of immunity from tragic consequences.

But drama tends dynamically towards a catastrophe. It took a step forward in the *Grand Grimoire* by introducing the conditional pact and another which endangered the soul of the exorcist, but whose ambiguities were such that the peril could be avoided. A binding bilateral pact leading inexorably to eternal damnation was the dark commentary of Christian mythology on ritual optimism. It conquered legend definitely in the person of Faust in the sixteenth century. Before that time many if not most of the pact-signing magicians of story had wriggled out of the trap with the help of the saints or of the Virgin Mary, their bodies often bruised and mangled, but spiritually whole. This was the miracle of Theophilus, and this was also the final fate of Sylvester II. The doom of Faustus was darker and took on the proportions of a tragic myth. As such it entered drama, which goes farther in the direction of tragedy than ritual is designed to do. For ritual takes the long view and points to regeneration following upon death. The slain and dismembered god has a ritual (and a religious) rebirth. Not so the tragic hero, the individual human being, who goes under in great tragedy to the sound of a note of reconciliation or resurgence, an echo from the rites. Both in the Faustbooks and in Marlowe's drama he went under irrevocably and irretrievably beyond the possibility of hope. The rituals which thereupon borrowed his name adapted themselves to this sobering circumstance as best they might, twisting and turning this way and that to avoid so desperate a conclusion to their optimistic premises.

In this great exemplar of legend and art evolving in modern times from a ritual process, the Satanic element or devil-worship was the added dimension, which transformed a ceremonial performance into a mythological occurrence fit to be immortalized in tragedy. But what has been demonstrated here in connexion with Faustus has wider implications; for there is evidence and to spare

that the myth of Satanism itself was very largely reared on the performance of non-Satanic rituals and their dissemination in manuscript or in print, whilst the literature and experiments devoted to white magic have had no comparable effect. Few but the readers of Somerset Maugham have heard of Lévi's evocation of Apollonius of Tyana. Many have heard and shuddered at the ghastly story of Gilles de Rais. Based on the Solomonic evocations made by Prelati and others, it sprang up almost overnight, a blood-curdling tale of horror retold in our own times by Huysmans in *Là-Bas*, who deliberately combined the maximum of misrepresentation about the hero with what was to all intents and purposes an 'exposure' of a modern Satanist Lodge and its celebration of the Black Mass. This gave another impetus to the legend; for the desire to believe in that unpleasing performance is deep-seated and widespread. It is an irrational mythological desire feeding on rumours and spurning proof. Shrill are the outraged protests when scepticism is displayed on the subject of this cherished illusion, and pained is the surprise. The suggestion that Guibourg may never have read the Amatory Mass over the naked body of Madame de Montespan is not a popular one; nor is the attempt to distinguish between that revolting performance and the abomination of the Black Mass likely to find much favour. The feeling of being cheated of one's rights accompanies the discovery that the blasphemous doings of Hell-Fire Francis at Medmenham Abbey, including the story of the baboon, were mere figments of a novelist's imagination, inflamed by the secrecy with which the revels were conducted.

So strong is the hold of the myth of Satanism over certain minds that when the rituals of black magic give it the lie, mythologists recondition the rituals. Lévi diabolized *The Constitution of Honorius* and claimed that it had been used as a preparatory step in the assassination of the Archbishop of Paris. In much the same spirit Montagu Summers described *Zekerbomi* as instrumental in the appalling crimes of the reputed author Peter Mora, who certainly must have been a Satanist, since he confessed to this charge under torture. This is the story of Gilles de Rais all over again. But even the frivolous and sceptical Casanova yielded to an irresistible mythological temptation when he invented or exaggerated that terrifying thunderstorm raging outside his magic

circle. Schröpfer's suicide was seized upon by the myth-makers as yet another instance of the doom of the devil's disciples; and a circle of chalk drawn to entice the fairies led to diabolic possession and the death of poor young Parkes.

These fluttering straws show one thing very clearly: wherever rites are practised in secret they will give rise to legends; and legends, although based upon facts, have little enough respect for them. Devils were invoked in the rituals we have been examining, and therefore (said legend) the devils must have been worshipped. Meanwhile the invocations of angels and good spirits failed rather signally to attract the attention of myth-makers in modern times, the days of *The Golden Legend* being passed, and that compilation being based not on secret rites and ceremonies but on the known and approved practices of the Church. Going back farther in time one finds rites originally barbarous and blood-stained gradually evolving to a higher level in Greek antiquity and generating myths of great imaginative beauty which were finally sublimated in the art of tragedy, in which the original cruelty of primitive conceptions wore a transcendental and mysterious aspect. As against this high religious sanction of ritual processes, Lucan's *Pharsalia* symbolizes the reverse tendency: to emphasize the darker and more horrible side of magic, to invent grisly details; and it is this tendency which has prevailed in modern times. The basic reason must be sought in religious intolerance using this weapon for purposes of propaganda. The early Christians were accused by their enemies of practising infanticide and other horrors during their secret ceremonies; they retaliated by spreading similar stories about the Jews; and when Christianity became the conquering creed a whole dark mythology was reared on the basis of pagan mystery cults and heretical sects whose forms of worship were similar enough to those of the One True Church to make the impression of parodies. Genuinely convinced as early, medieval and even modern Christians were that theirs was the only true God and that all His rivals were devils, it must naturally follow that the votaries of other creeds worshipped evil and execrated good. From that position to the corollary that all secret ceremonies were Satanic by nature and involved desecration and blasphemy was an absolutely logical step if a socially disastrous one.

The proceedings against the Knights Templar in the thirteenth century are a crying instance of the power of the myth of Satanism. The secret initiation-ceremonies furnished the necessary pretext to Philippe le Bel and the Pope who were determined to dispossess and crush the order. Confessions as to the sacrilegious nature of the rites and the vows were extracted by torture, retracted and extracted again, until one sickens as one reads. Finally the order was exterminated. Avaricious, ruthless and cruel rulers had taken advantage of a vital spiritual factor in the religious beliefs of their day in order to destroy a potential danger to themselves. This does not dispose one to regard very favourably the promulgators of the myth. It was at least equally potent and dynamic and even more generally disastrous during the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The fearful phenomenon of universal witch-belief, manifest in the trials, confessions, torture and persecution of thousands upon thousands of helpless human beings, witnessed to the strength of the mass delusion of the Black Sabbath, which spread like wildfire throughout Europe and America scattering panic and leaving a trail of repulsive practices in its wake. Finally it died down and only sporadic little outbursts remained to show the slender basis of objective reality which had originally fired the spark.

But the myth of Satanism is tough and indeed well-nigh indestructible. Thriving as it does on anything concealed from the public gaze, it fastened like a leech upon the secret societies and notably upon Freemasonry. Both the society itself and the Holy See played into the hands of the myth-makers in this matter; the first because of its ritual ceremonies and its much advertized secrets; and the second because of its uncompromising hostility to what appeared to be a rival cult. The attitude of the Church is comprehensible enough, granted its basic assumption of the monopoly of truth; but even its staunchest friends must feel that in this instance it finally went too far. Beginning almost automatically with a Bull excommunicating all Freemasons in 1738, Clement XII gave as his reasons the secret nature of the institution and the highly suspicious fact that men of all religious persuasions were allowed to enter it; an edict of January 19, 1739, made membership a crime punishable by death, and it was said that a Frenchman, who had published a book on Freemasonry,

suffered this penalty, which however only seriously menaced those who lived in the Papal States. Indeed so many pilgrims journeyed to Rome in the Jubilee year of 1750 to obtain absolution from Benedict XIV for having been initiated into Freemasonry, that the Pope renewed and confirmed Clement's Bull in 1751. Casanova's incarceration under the Leads was largely due to his connexion with Freemasonry; and the hapless Cagliostro was actually condemned to death in 1791 as a heretic and a Freemason by the Inquisition, although the sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. Thereafter every newly elected Pope fulminated against the Order in Bulls or encyclicals, but it continued to thrive and to gain much ground.

Reviewing this position in his epistle *Scite profecto* on July 14, 1873, Pius IX asserted roundly that Satan himself was the Founder of Freemasonry; and the Grand-Orient of Paris gave some colour to this declaration later by eliminating the belief in God and the immortality of the soul from the necessary conditions of entry. Although this led to a schism between English and American Freemasonry on the one hand and the French Lodges on the other, the Vatican seized upon the partial tolerance of atheism as another reason for fastening the label of Satanic society upon the Order as a whole, which was done with much emphasis by Leo XIII in his encyclical of April 20, 1884. After that came the deluge. Sincere if misguided Catholic fanatics, a Father Müller, a Kostka, an Archbishop Meurin, hastened to develop this theme in books with such sensational titles as *The Secrets of Hell*, *Lucifer Unmasked*, *Freemasonry*, *Synagogue of Satan*. In these rabid attacks on the Order, they interpreted the Pope's belief that Freemasonry was inspired by Satan in the sense that Satan was worshipped in the Lodges, that he appeared personally to his votaries, and that Freemasonry was in fact the organized cult of Satan, Satanism pure and simple. The myth was triumphant again.

Yet it no longer had that deadly power which had caused the annihilation of the Templars and the persecution of the witches. Remembering those good old days, it kept on pointing back to the Knights Templar and insisting that the head of Baphomet was now in the Lodge of Charleston; but although it aroused extreme excitement and implicit belief, it did not lead to bloodshed, nor to torture, nor to any worse crimes against humanity than calumny,



evil-speaking, lying and slandering. It did, however, witness to a most depraved type of imagination and produced one of the most audacious literary swindles which have disgraced any age. The publications which the pseudonymous Léo Taxil and Dr Bataille, with their Italian colleague Domenico Margiotta, poured forth on the subject of so-called Palladism from their prurient pens purported to be revelations about Freemasonry from seceders or spies on the Order, but were in fact fabrications of the most transparent kind. Or so it seems to-day; at the time they obtained widespread and fervent belief; and what seems almost incredible, priestly, even papal recognition, encomiums, blessings and decorations. Blinded by the myth of Satanism, the Vatican and its supporters were actually duped by this sorry gang of swindlers who were making big money from the myth, and perfectly unscrupulous as to the means. So incredible and preposterous as well as disgusting were their 'revelations' that the Freemasons were goaded to protest; and in particular ever more numerous voices were raised to question the identity and even the existence of the one-time Satanist and now ardent convert to Catholicism called Diana Vaughan. In her *Memoirs of an Ex-Palladist* (which earned her the blessing by proxy of the Pope) she did indeed draw the long bow of supernatural fiction so recklessly and aroused such frantic controversy as to whether or not there actually was such a person, that Léo Taxil was finally forced to promise to produce her. This was to be done at a mammoth press-conference on Easter Monday, April 19, 1897, in Paris:

The nineteenth of April arrived at last. The hall was filled with journalists from whom umbrellas and sticks had been taken at the door. Instead of Diana, it was Taxil who appeared. He made a speech which for effrontery and cynicism has not its equal in literature. He confessed that he had committed infanticide, since Palladism was dead, and that he himself, its father, had killed it. The only Diana Vaughan he knew was a young girl whom he employed as a stenographer for a monthly wage of a hundred and fifty francs. For twelve years his purpose had been to study the Roman Catholic Church thoroughly with the aid of a series of mystifications which should lay bare the secrets of the minds and hearts of the sacerdotal hierarchy. He had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. After his pretended conversion, the means to achieve his ends had been suggested to him by the fact that the Church sees in Freemasonry its most dangerous adversary, and that many Catholics

with the Pope at their head believe that Satan is the chief of this anti-clerical association. He declared that at Rome the Cardinals and the Curia had wittingly and in bad faith patronized the writings published in his name, and under the names of Bataille and Diana Vaughan. The Vatican knew the fraudulent nature of their pretended revelations, but was delighted to use them in order to foster in the faithful a belief profitable to the Church. The Bishop of Charleston had, he declared, written to the Pope that the stories about that town were false; but Leo XIII had imposed silence upon that prelate and also upon the Apostolic Vicar of Gibraltar, who had affirmed that there were no subterranean caves in that district where Masons celebrated infamous rites according to Bataille. Taxil proceeded imperturbably in this fashion in the midst of howls of rage and maledictions from the audience, who realized too late why their sticks and umbrellas had been confiscated at the door. At last the furious public was no longer to be controlled. Taxil escaped thanks to the protection of the police and calmly retired to a nearby café.

For some time after the anti-Masonic society could only lick its wounds. Nevertheless there still remained some tenaciously credulous persons who refused to believe in the unreality of Diana...<sup>1</sup>

Although the demoniacal Diana Vaughan is a back-number to-day, the notion that all secret societies are sinister, subversive and represent as a whole a vast conspiracy against Christianity and civilization still flourishes, as can be seen in such works as *Light-Bearers of Darkness*, 1930 and *The Trail of the Serpent*, 1936, by an anonymous author self-styled 'Inquire Within'. What residuum of truth there may be in such allegations it is impossible to say, but they are a natural outcome of quasi-religious secret ceremonies, and will endure as long as concealment endures. Meanwhile Alestre Crowley (1875-1947) did his finally ineffective best to set the myth of Satanism in circulation again. In a positive spate of pagan, gnostic, pantheistic, 'Qabalistic' and generally speaking synthetic ritual processes published in his periodical *The Equinox* (1909-13) and in *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929) he set himself up as the prophet of a new religion, rabidly anti-Christian in character. This was reinforced by *The Book of the Law* published in *The Equinox of the Gods* in 1937 and also by an unremitting campaign of self-advertisement and propaganda.

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Lea, *Léo Taxil, Diana Vaughan et l'Eglise Romaine*, Paris, 1901, pp. 25f.

No one can say that Crowley did not bend his utmost energies and his by no means negligible mental gifts to the task of spreading his creed; but to read his lucubrations and to hear tell of his antics is to witness the death-throes of Satanism, desperately striving to stave off extinction, or in modern parlance to stage a come-back. It did not succeed; for, in spite of the sensational nature of Crowley's claims and the apocalyptic quality of his utterances, he gained no converts of importance and never attracted a large following. The times were against him. There were much more potent, dangerous, destructive and evil personalities about, who have produced disasters on a scale of such magnitude as to make *The Book of the Law* seem vapid and the writer's influence on the life of his age utterly negligible. He is probably one of the more remarkable of those essentially unremarkable individuals who have from time to time throughout the course of history practised what the mythologists preach and persuaded a small group of eccentric or hysterical or neurotic or decadent persons to do likewise and join them in satanizing ceremonies. Their importance is slight unless they find their way into legend and thence into literature. Crowley has edged his way into fiction, being the title-hero of Somerset Maugham's *Magician*, whilst Michael Burt borrowed from his Gnostic Mass for *The Case of the Angels' Trumpets*. This may be as far as he will get; but as long as his memory lasts, so long too will the tale he told of how he celebrated the Black Mass in Cambridge.

Belief in the Black Mass is a perennial and hardy offshoot from the parent-stem of Satanism. It figured noisomely in the accounts of the fictitious Palladists. In that particular case the material was taken from Huysmans; and although I should not like to assert that the ceremony has never figured in real life, I am definitely of the opinion that its native element, the source whence it derives its strength, is legend and literature. The ephemeral brotherhoods and societies anxious to implement it probably have recourse to such vivid works of fiction as A. E. W. Mason's *Prisoner of the Opal* in order to establish a text. There may on the other hand be traditional Black Mass rituals in existence; but they are not available for inspection; whereas the legend of Satanism can be discerned taking shape from muddle-headed but genuinely pious Jewish and Christian invocation-ceremonies; whilst the false

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ascription of Satanism to the Knights Templar, to Gilles de Rais, to hosts of bewildered 'witches', to the Freemasons and even to non-existent Palladists induces a feeling of scepticism which there is little temptation to overcome.

The myth of Satanism has had a very long lease of life and has done untold harm during the successive ages in which it was an article of unquestioned belief. Its ritual origins are extraordinarily interesting; its fascinating poetical results in the vast literature of witchcraft and magic open up illimitable vistas for research. In the single instance of Faustus I have endeavoured to show that ceremonies designed to constrain obedience from the fiends gradually but inexorably developed the notion of a pact whereby the mighty magician of yore was transformed into the tragic figure of a lost soul. Incarnate in the person of Faustus he dominated the mind of Europe from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth as a lawless aspirant to forbidden knowledge and power, trapped in the ceremonial circle whose only outlet was the bottomless pit of hell. Lessing lifted up his voice in protest; Goethe reinterpreted the myth, much as Aeschylus had altered the assumptions of the legend of the House of Tantalus, by permeating it through and through with a totally different conception of God. The spell was broken in literature; it was temporarily lifted from life; but it still lingers on in legend and its power is not exhausted yet.

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